Stourbridge
CHRONICLE

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HOLE LOT OF CASH TO REPAIR ROADS

Report by Marion Brennan

MORE than half a million pounds is being spent on mending Dudley's crumbling roads after sub-zero temperatures continue to cause havoc to the borough's highways.

Dudley Council has announced a further £164,000 to help repair damage to road surfaces after a winter that has taken a heavy toll.

It follows funding of £238,000 earlier this year and £150,000 in December.

Cllr Karen Shakespeare

Bosses say potholes have been made worse or new ones appeared as freeze-thaw conditions leave their mark.

The council has vowed to prioritise potholes despite slashing £300,000 from its streets budget in October. They claim to have 'streamlined' the service by focusing on the borough's biggest and busiest roads. The latest funding is part of an £844,000 pot of money from the Department for Transport paid to the West Midlands Combined Authority for the region.

Harsh

In Dudley, special pothole crews have been working round-the-clock since the harsh weather hit to tackle the damage left behind. The authority was already coping with damage caused by snow and ice in December.

Councillor Karen Shakespeare, Dudley's cabinet member for environmental services, said: "The snow and ice we have had in recent weeks has really hit our roads hard – that's something we cannot avoid – but this extra money will go a long way in helping us deal with the potholes and other road defects Our crews are working hard to identify areas and respond to reports, and I would like to thank motorists for bearing with us."

Council leader Patrick Harley has denied the authority's focus on main roads means more minor streets would be left unattended, insisting teams could often react to potholes on quieter roads more quickly.

The Department for Transport says the average cost of each repair is £53 with a total of 90,480 holes to be filled across the West Midlands.

STATUE OF HERO IS READY TO BE CAST IN BRONZE

Dudley North MP Ian Austin is seen admiring the clay version of the Frank Foley statue with sculptor Andy de Comyn

THE final stages of work on a bronze statue of anti-Nazi hero Frank Foley is set to begin.

Midlands artist Andy de Comyn has completed a full stage clay model of the 'British Schindler', who repeatedly risked his life to save Jews in 1930s Nazi Germany when working for the British Government.

The model, which depicts Major Foley quietly seated on a park bench, will now cast in bronze in the coming weeks.

The statue is set to take pride of place in Mary Stevens Park, just down the road from Major Foley's former home in Eveson Road, Norton.

Dudley North MP Ian Austin, who spearheaded the campaign for the tribute, said: "I am delighted at the progress of the statue.

"The final piece should be ready next by the summer so people can learn about Major Foley and our country's role in fighting for freedom, democracy and tolerance against Nazi Germany.

"I can't wait until the final statue is unveiled."

POLICE

Commissioner wants to end gun 'subsidy'

HOME Secretary Amber Rudd has been urged to drastically increase fees that police can charge for firearms licences to stop forces from 'subsidising' gun ownership.

West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner David Jamieson says the region's cash-strapped force takes a financial hit of nearly £37 every time it issues a firearms certificate. He said the total loss last year was £98,000.

Current firearms charges do not meet West Midlands Police's administration costs from processing applications and making the relevant checks.

INDUSTRY

Bearings company expanding on estate

A LEADING manufacturer and distributor to the engineering industry has expanded its operations in Dudley, more than doubling the size of its industrial unit.

John Handley Bearings has moved from Wombourne to Building 69 at The Pensnett Estate, from where the family-run business will supply high-quality bearings.

The company is looking at employing additional staff in the coming months.

DEFENCE

Chief praises troops on first Afghan visit

DEFENCE Secretary Gavin Williamson praised the work of British troops during his first visit to Afghanistan.

The South Staffs MP visited a British Army base in the war-torn country, where he also met with Afghan Security Forces (ASF). British soldiers are providing support to ASF as part of a NATO operation. Mr Williamson commended the efforts of UK troops as the 1st Security Force Assistance Brigade starts their mission.

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Tributes as true blue former MP dies, 75

Warren Hawksley in 2008

FORMER Halesowen and Stourbridge Conservative MP – and arch Eurosceptic – Warren Hawksley has died at the age of 75, following a short illness.

Mr Hawksley, who was also a director at Staffordshire-based substance abuse charity |Re-Solv, was one of the Maastricht rebels, one of only a small number of Tories not to have voted for any part of that EU treaty.

Mr Hawksley was known for his forthright views, particularly on law and order, having for many years called for the reintroduction of corporal punishment for young offenders.

He was the MP for Halesowen and Stourbridge from 1992-97, having previously represented Wrekin from 1979-87.

The Shropshire-born politician was renowned for his strong views on immigration and once called for a complete ban on immigration into the UK for five years.

Tributes have poured in for Mr Hawksley, who has been living in France with his family in recent years.

Mike Wood, the Conservative MP for Dudley South and a former Dudley councillor, campaigned for him in the 1992 and 1997 elections. He said: "I got to know him beyond his slightly 'full on' public persona, and will remember him as a very kind and generous man, who was always very supportive."

Halesowen and Rowley Regis Conservative MP James Morris, said: "He served as Halesowen's MP for five years and is still fondly remembered by many for the way he represented the area and his strong opinions."

Stone's Tory MP Sir Bill Cash said of his fellow Masstricht rebel: "He was a great Eurosceptic."

Mr Hawksley is survived by his wife Kathleen and two daughters.

Cocaine king will have to pay back thousands

THE KINGPIN of a multi-million pound cocaine racket centred on Kingswinford has been ordered to pay back more than £500,000 of his ill-gotten gains.

Khalad Uddin had lived a luxury lifestyle as he gathered more than £2 million from his illegal activity, which saw him act as a link between Albanian gangsters in London and drug dealers in Kingswinford.

The crook, who was last year jailed for 16 years, has now been ordered to pay back some of his ill-gotten riches or face further time behind bars.

At a confiscation hearing, Judge Murray Creed declared Uddin had profited £2,016,351 from his offending. But the 36-year-old had just £541,334.52 available to hand back to the authorities.

Khalad Uddin

Uddin's property will be sold to gather some of the cash, Birmingham Crown Court heard on Friday. If he fails to pay up within the next three months he could face an extra five years in jail.

The cocaine gang was smashed by undercover police and saw 14 criminals last year jailed for a total of more than 100 years. The network included a five-strong gang in Kingswinford.

Uddin, described as the 'spider at the centre of the web', co-ordinated crooks in the Black Country, Oxford, the West Country and London. The defendant, formerly of Little Brewery Street, Oxford, admitted money laundering and two counts of conspiracy to supply cocaine. His jail term is running concurrently with a 14-year sentence for conspiracy to transfer firearms and ammunition.

Uddin lived lavishly, spending £62,000 on renting fast cars and expensive properties. He had 70 pairs of designer jeans.

West Side Story's happy ending

Planning a wedding – Mitch Bastable proposed to partner Beth Berwick-Lowe on stage in Stourbridge

WEST Side Story finally got its happy ending when one actor popped the question to his leading lady for real.

Mitch Bastable and Beth Berwick-Lowe are both members of Tab Operatic Society and both had major roles when the famous musical was staged in Stourbridge last week, with Beth as Maria and Mitch playing Bernardo.

The musical updates Romeo and Juliet to New York street gangs in the 1950s and has a similar heartbreaking ending. But Mitch, from Pedmore, brought the joy back by popping the question to his girlfriend of 14 months, getting down on one knee with a white gold 47 cluster diamond ring in his hand.

Mitch, 44, said: "We had just been to New York and I think people thought I would do it then, but that was obvious.

"So at the end of our last show on Saturday night I climbed up the balcony and proposed."

£20,000 bid to restore an historic burial site

AN historic cemetery is set for a revamp after campaigners launched a bid to restore graves and headstones.

Lye and Wollescote Cemetery, near Stourbridge, is in line for the restoration after a bid was made by a friends of the cemetery group. Soldiers from the First World War are among those buried at the site.

The move comes after the site's chapel which houses Dudley Council's Citizenship and Registration Services underwent a £1 million revamp in 2015 .

A council report outlining the plans said: "An application has been received from Friends of Lye and Wollescote Cemetery, which supports the management of the cemetery so that it is a welcoming, accessible place for everyone in the community to be proud of and enjoy.

"The group is seeking £5,000 towards the £20,000 estimated cost of undertaking restoration to some of the famous graves and headstones in the cemetery, to enhance the walking tours for schools, students and the community."

The cemetery is looked after by the friends group. The site dates back to the Victorian era.

Local historian and author Jean Weston said: "A lot of people who helped to build Lye during the 19th century as an important industrial area are buried there."

MP campaigns on job exploitation

DUDLEY North MP Ian Austin has called for a ban on companies taking people on for unpaid work trials which have no guaranteed job offer at the end.

Mr Austin said it was wrong that some businesses were asking potential staff to work for no money.

He cites one case in which prospective employees were told to work for 40 hours before they would be considered for a job.

The Labour MP said: "I'm not against proper work experience programmes for students but I have met young people in Dudley who have been expected to do unpaid shifts for free before they are even considered for a job. I think it is completely unacceptable. I want to see this exploitative practice banned. The Government should take action."

Singing for charity

MORE than £1,600 was raised at a retirement village's entertainment night in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support. Singers performed at Broad Meadow in Dudley. Money was raised by ticket sales, a raffle and also a coffee morning.

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Teenager is locked up after drug raid on flat

A TEENAGER has been locked up for three years after heroin and crack cocaine worth more than £4,000 were found in a raid on his flat.

Shane Bowater tried to escape through the back door but he ran straight into a waiting policeman, a court heard.

Mr Peter Grice, prosecuting, said officers converged on High Street, Lye, on February 27 last year. Bowater, who was 17 at the time, tried to flee with a bag stuffed with drugs and associated paraphernalia but was caught and arrested.

Inside the bag were 16 packets of crack cocaine with a street value of £770 and 80 wraps of heroin worth £820. Also found were £110 cash, a list of names and numbers, and a mobile phone with messages linking him to drug deals.

Wolverhampton Crown Court heard a search revealed two digital scales, another dealer list and a mobile phone containing 'relevant messages', plus more heroin and crack cocaine.

In total, he was in possession of £2,300 worth of heroin and crack cocaine with a street value of £1,840.

Defending Bowater, Ms Nicole Steers said he had confessed to using and selling cannabis previously and claimed to have 'found' the heroin and crack cocaine. "He stole them," she said. "He thought it was cannabis."

She added that Bowater had to 'fend for himself' when he was put into care after the deaths of both of his parents.

Bowater, now 18, of Highland Road, Dudley, admitted two charges of possession of Class A drugs with intent to supply others.

He was sent to a young offender institution for three years.

Walking on fire for charity funds

A LAW firm with offices across the Black Country and Worcestershire is organising a fire and ice event near Dudley to help a local charity.

Thursfields Solicitors is inviting companies to take part raising money for Black Country Women's Aid by entering a team of five to take part in fire and glass walking at Himley Hall on April 25.

Entry will cost £300 per team and £30 for spectators or £30 per person. The price includes a hot buffet and live music from The Pete Boddis Band.

Thursfields, which has offices in Sedgley, Halesowen, Stourport and Kidderminster, will be helping the charity's work in the local area with the fundraiser.

Former Baggies star striker is bankrupt

Lee Hughes has been declared bankrupt

FORMER West Bromwich Albion hero Lee Hughes has been declared bankrupt.

Hughes, 41, who earned £20,000-a-week as a Premiership striker, joined non-league Halesowen Town FC earlier this month.

The former roofer began his career at Kidderminster Harriers before joining the Baggies, leaving in 2001 when he signed for Coventry for £5 million.

Last May he took his first steps in management when he became player-manager at Worcester City but ended his contract to join for Evo-Stik Premier side Halesowen Town.

Hughes, who also played for AFC Telford, had two spells at the Baggies from 1997-2001 and 2002-2004, scoring 90 goals in 211 games.

He scored 70 goals in 139 games for Harriers.

Dangerous

He scored 203 league goals with seven different clubs but spent three years out of the game when he was sent to prison in August 2004 for causing a death by dangerous driving.

After his release from prison in August 2007, he played at Oldham, Blackpool, Notts County and Port Vale. He was then appointed as Worcester City's joint manager, after agreeing to rejoin the relegated National League North side.

The news of his bankruptcy was announced in the London Gazette, the official public record for bankrupts, after a petition was filed in January and heard in the High Court earlier this month.

Smethwick-born Hughes declined to comment.

Residents determined to resist travellers camp

RESIDENTS have vowed to conduct their own contamination checks on a controversial site where a travellers camp is planned.

Around 50 people gathered at the Apple Tree Inn in Coseley to voice their concerns over Dudley Council's plan to create a temporary travellers transit site in Dudley borough, so the authority has more power to halt unauthorised camps.

Proposals for the site in Budden Road were approved last month by the council's planning committee and the results of a public consultation, which runs until Saturday, will give the community the chance to have their say.

Resident Tony Sheldon, 70, said: "We are going to do our own test on the site to check for contamination. We're prepared to do anything to stop it. We will fund it ourselves if we have to."

Protesters have previously raised concerns over the safety of the site, which has been recorded as containing foundry and construction waste.

Cheaper

Mr Sheldon said: "When you stop and look at the sites that were suggested, how they came up with this as the preferred site I have no idea. There are more appropriate and cheaper sites to convert.

"What really gets me is the fact that they couldn't afford to refurbish the site a few years ago."

The issue was discussed for more than two hours by residents at the meeting.

Mr Sheldon added: "It's been said the site must not be near residents' properties but it's right at the back of people's houses.

"There will be a 10 per cent depreciation in house prices because of the site and house insurance will also be higher."

An original shortlist of locations for the travellers' transit camp had included sites in Lye and in Dudley.

Having such a site will make the process of moving on travellers easier from illegal land invasions.

Facebook plea locates stolen van

Businesswoman Julie Evans is delighted to get her van back after a member of the public spotted it in London

A BUSINESSWOMAN from Stourton who fell victim to thieves has seen her livelihood saved thanks to the power of social media.

Julie Evans came up with the idea of a Gamer Van – a video gaming vehicle for children's parties – and launched the company last November. She spent thousands of pounds getting the business going only for thieves to take her precious van just after she had it painted with signage.

Julie put details of the theft on her Facebook page and it was shared more than 800 times, helping to track down the van 150 miles away, in south London. It was there that a member of the public liked the idea and looked up her page from the details painted on the van.

Her van had been stolen from from outside Wombourne Leisure Centre on Ounsdale Road on March 6.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Driver is charged over crash death

AN electrician has been charged over the death of a mother in a car crash near her home in Lower Gornal.

Vikki Jones, aged 30, died following the incident in Wood Road in Lower Gornal in September.

Tyler Kendall, 22, of Whitebeam Close, Lower Gornal, has been charged with causing death by dangerous driving. He has also been charged with failing to stop after a road accident. Kendall will appear before Walsall magistrates on April 4.

Following Ms Jones' death, a vigil was held by members of the community and there were calls for road safety measures.

Roller up for a disco on wheels

FAMILIES are urged to get their skates on and head down to the new roller disco being held at a borough leisure centre.

Crystal Leisure Centre im Bell Street, Stourbridge, is offering a weekly family fun roller skating disco on Saturday evenings. Adults and children alike can whizz round the centre's sports hall to the latest tunes and practice their tricks and turns from 6 to 8pm. The session is suitable for all abilities and costs £5 for people bringing their own skates and £5.50 for those who need to hire skates.

Business park at heart of new zone

DUDLEY is set for an economic boost as council bosses were yesterday (Wednesday) discussing plans for a new business estate, as part of the DY5 Enterprise Zone.

A Local Development Order (LDO) for Blackbrook Valley in Brierley Hill could be rolled out on April 1 if Dudley Council's cabinet approved the plans.

The LDO would run for 10 years and make it easier for businesses to set up there by simplifying the planning process.

Blackbrook Valley is a key site in the DY5 Enterprise Zone.

Audition afternoon as theatre group recruits

WOLVERHAMPTON Musical Comedy Company is looking for recruits as it plans shows for this year and next.

Muscom will be holding an open audition at the Dormston Centre in Sedgley on Sunday afternoon from 1 to 4. The amateur company is currently planning productions of In The Heights and The Producers.

Places are available for over 16s, email hollywhitemuscom@gmail.com or call 07920011740.

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COUNTY NEWS

1,000 cars will roll up for show

MIDLANDS' Motorfest will return to the region next month with up to one thousand cars spanning a century of motoring. It will be back at Weston Park on the Staffordshire-Shropshire border on Easter Sunday, April 1.

From classic American cars to British icons, Motorfest attracts a wide range of vehicles including vintage commercials and custom cars.

More than 35 car clubs will display their members' stunning vehicles and the 'Decibel Duel' competition to find the loudest engine returns to the Live Arena. Tickets cost £8 adults, £3 children and £20 for a family ticke in advance. Visit classicmotorshows.co.uk

Choirs join forces in aid of hospice

A BLACK Country choir will be joined by three guest vocal groups for its 21st anniversary charity concert in Dudley.

Voices in Harmony from Cradley Heath will be singing in Dudley Town Hall on May 12 at 7pm. Also performing will be Viva Musica, Gentlemen Songsters and Colla Voce.

The concert, compered by TV personality and comedian Don Maclean, will be raising money for Mary Stevens Hospice. Tickets cost £12 from www.vih choir.org/contact-us/7-ticket-secretary or from the venue.

Voices in Harmony also has a concert at Darkhouse Baptist Church on April 14.

Black Books star Dylan's Brum date

DOWNBEAT comedian Dylan Moran is returning to Birmingham on a new tour. The Black Books TV star will come to the region on his Dr Cosmos tour, heading to 41 UK venues.

He is set to offer his unique take on love, politics, misery and the everyday absurdities of life at the New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, on September 22. The comedian, actor and writer became the youngest winner of the Perrier Award at the Edinburgh Fringe in 1996.

Monthly drop-in coffee morning aimed at OAPs

PENSIONERS with a disability can visit a new monthly coffee morning in Dudley. The Age Ability Café, which has been set up by the Queens Cross Network in partnership with Disability in Action, runs on the last Friday of every month from 10am to 1pm for those aged over 67. Organised with sDudley Council, the café is held at the Queens Cross Network building on Wellington Road, Dudley.

Agency merger to make adoption easier

A NEW approach and website for people looking to adopt in the Black Country has been launched.

Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton are coming together to create a new regional adoption agency, adoption@heart. The launch of the new website, which is jam packed with useful information, is the first part of the process.

A number of events will be held during March across the Black Country where people will be able to find out more about adoption.

Although the four authorities have worked together for more than ten years to deliver some adoption services, the new agency will revolutionise the way adoption services are delivered across the Black Country.

It will combine existing services of each council to speed up the adoption process and reduce the amount of time it takes to find permanent families for looked after children.

Councillor Anne Millward, cabinet member for children's services, said: "We're in the process of developing our regional adoption agency and we are really excited about the prospects it brings. The launch of the new website is the first step in us providing a regional adoption agency in the Black Country. We hope this approach will streamline the adoption process and increase the number of children being matched with people wanting to adopt."

Visit www.adoptionheart.org.uk or call the free adoption helpline on 0800 073 0597.

Meanwhile, a major drive to find new foster carers in Dudley has also been launched.

Dirty instruments led to ops being cancelled

By Jamie Brassington

HOSPITAL patients had operations cancelled on the day at Russells Hall as equipment was too dirty for doctors to use.

Medical instruments returned dirty from the hospital's sterilisation department forcing the last minute cancellation of three operations.

The report, sent out by the Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust which runs the hospital, said: "We have had instruments returned from HSDU (Hospital Sterilisation and Decontamination Unit) either dirty or not in sufficient time for procedures to be undertaken resulting in on the day cancellations."

It comes after the it was revealed earlier this month that a man had a surgical instrument left inside him following an operation in October at Russells Hall.

Diane Wake, chief executive of the Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust, said: "We always do our best to make sure that operations and procedures go ahead as planned. However, sometimes we do have to rearrange operations due to unforeseen circumstances.

"We work closely with our partners and the instrument manufactures to ensure all our surgical instruments are maintained, cleaned and available for surgeries.

"Our patients are our priority, therefore, if we are unable to safely perform an operation we will reschedule.

"We recorded one incident in February involving dirty instruments which led to three cancelled operations.

"We monitor every theatre list carefully and follow the national WHO (World Health Organisation) checklist so that any issue are reported and learnt from. We share that learning with all relevant staff."

It's a purrfect pint at top pub The Cat

Ryan Hunt, chairman of the Dudley and South Staffs branch of Camra, with Dan and Aimee Hicks at The Cat Inn

REGULARS came together to raise a glass in celebration after a village pub near Stourbridge was named one of the top hostelries in the region.

The Cat Inn at Enville was named Dudley and South Staffordshire's pub of the year by the Campaign for Real Ale. Customers raised their favourite local brew Enville Ale as hosts at the Bridgnorth Road pub were handed their accolade.

Dan Hicks, manager of the pub for six years, said: "I think we won because we are a traditional pub, a really welcoming country pub. The customers came out to support us when we were presented with the certificate."

The 300-year-old pub is now in the running to be crowned the West Midlands' best when it competes in the regional finals.

Mr Hicks, 43, who lives at the pub with wife Aimee and three-year-old son Harvey, said: "It's been great working here. It's my life."

Meanwhile, the Stourbridge and Halesowen branch of the Campaign for Real Ale has chosen its pub of the year.

Members will be visiting the winner, the Waggon and Horses, in Stourbridge Road, Halesowen, at noon on Saturday to make the presentation.

£90k role aiming to help council save money

A £90,000-a-year officer is set to be hired by a Black Country council – and tasked with delivering millions of pounds worth of savings.

Cash-strapped Dudley Council is looking to bring in the high-earning commercial chief to lead its cost-cutting strategy. The authority is aiming to save £15 million by shaking up the way it buys goods and services.

Bosses said the new top officer would make the local authority more 'commercially savvy and efficient'.

But opposition councillors warned they would be 'keeping a close eye' on the new post to ensure it was delivering value for money.

Council leader Patrick Harley said: "This is a very exciting and important move for us as we look to make this authority more commercially savvy and efficient than ever before.

"The person coming in will specifically be tasked with making significant savings. We are around 90 per cent self-sufficient, which means we rely less on Government subsidy but this appointment is about closing that gap even further.

Benefit

"The people who benefit from that in the long run are the taxpayers of this borough."

The new appointment will be tasked with ensuring the council makes better use of its funds and identify ways to bring more money in.

The Conservative administration unveiled major investment plans last year, including a new leisure centre built in Dudley and two others in Stourbridge and Halesowen refurbished.

Councillor Pete Lowe, leader of the council's Labour group, said: "We need to make sure that it is good value for money. Every position needs to be scrutinised and we will be seeking clarification that the outlay into this post is delivering results. We will be keeping a very close eye on this post."

A final decision on the post was due to be made by cabinet members yesterday (Wednesday).

Join the chorus on Good Friday

THE public have been invited to take part in a choral work, a performance of Stainer's Crucifixion on Good Friday.

The oratorio is being performed in St Thomas's Church in Stourbridge, March 30, at 6pm.

Visitors can pay £5 to take part in the rehearsal, from 3.15pm. Tickets for the performance are £7.

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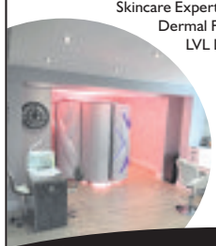
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Snow falls gave early spring a winter chill

SHOWS were cancelled, attractions closed and transport disrupted as more snow put a stop to a string of weekend events across the region at the weekend.

Most people were taken by surprise by the force of the latest wintry snap, dubbed the Mini Beast From The East, which covered the region under several inches of snow.

Snow ploughs kept Birmingham Airport running overnight although flights were suspended for a time.

National Express reported that a number of its bus routes had been cut short or diverted because of the snow across the region.

Among the early casualties of the weather on the events calendar was the Stafford Half-Marathon, which was called off on Friday. The event has been rescheduled to April 15.

The Severn Valley Railway managed to keep the steam train services running as scheduled for its popular spring gala.

The Black Country Living Museum in Dudley tweeted a picture of its snow-lined streets with the message that the venue would be unable to open on Sunday. Nearby Dudley Zoo was also shu and in Wordsley the Red House Glass Cone Museum was closed.

However, normal services were restored by Monday as a thaw set in as temperatures began to rise.

England game is to honour Cyrille

AN UNDER-21 international at Molineux will be played in tribute to football legend Cyrille Regis, the Football Association has announced.

England Under-21s will host their Romanian counterparts on Saturday (5.15pm kick-off) in a friendly contest that has now been dubbed the 'Cyrille Regis International'.

Wreaths will be laid by representatives of his former clubs West Bromiwch Albion, Wolves, Villa and Coventry – as well as England – ahead of the game, while a minute's applause will also be held.

Regis, who won five senior international caps, and also scored three goals in six appearances for England Under-21s, died in January aged 59.

Seeking family

RELATIVES of a 52-year-old man who died this month are being sought. Black Country Coroner's Court is seeking family of Simon Beech, who died in Dudley on March 3. Call Elaine Huckfield on 0121 569 7200.

Final blow for Hippodrome campaign

What now for Dudley Hippodrome?

CAMPAIGNERS fighting to save Dudley Hippodrome have had their last ditch hopes of reviving the former venue quashed.

Council bosses agreed to take the landmark on Castle Hill back into their possession from Black Country Hippodrome group after ruling that a five-year lease was unworkable.

Dudley Council's cabinet voted in favour of retaining the building, which needs to have asbestos removed, after claiming the group which signed the lease in December 2016 failed to hit targets.

The decision made was 'called-in' to the council's overview and scrutiny board with campaigners hoping it would be referred back to the cabinet.

But now the Black Country Hippodrome dream has evaporated, after councillors agreed to take back control of the former theatre and bingo hall.

Gordon Downing, who represented the Black Country Hippodrome group,said: "The council has been dead against it right from the word go. I'm not saying individual councillors but the council in general since we started six years ago. Every obstacle has been put in our way.

"If we can't get funding because the council hasn't backed us and we don't have a 25-year lease, I would like to know how we're supposed to get funding to remove the asbestos."

Strategic director for Dudley Council, Alan Lunt, said: "I think what the group has done they should be proud of. But unfortunately, it has failed."

The future of the building remains unclear but it is understood that Dudley College has shown interest in the site.

New police station at Brierley Hill proposed

A POLICE station will be rebuilt in Brierley Hill and two others in the Black Country revamped as part of cost-saving plans.

Brierley Hill Police Station, which is currently the headquarters for the Dudley neighbourhood, will be rebuilt under an estate strategy by West Midlands Police.

Wolverhampton's Bilston Street police station and West Bromwich's New Street station will be refurbished.

The planned work has come to light in a proposal to close 24 stations across the West Midlands, including eight in the Black Country, saving the force a total of £5 million a year.

The money will go towards work on the new and existing stations, which could cost up to £56m.

The force has said that the sale of the 24 stations will protect 100 police officer posts.

The proposal is being considered by West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner David Jamieson this week.

Brierley Hill ward councillor Rachel Harris said: "This is good news for Brierley Hill. But I'm concerned that a revamp will actually turn into a closure of other services and a loss of resources on the ground.

Purpose

"Brierley Hill Police Station isn't fit for purpose. It has soldiered on and on and, particularly with austerity, it hasn't had a chance to be brought up to scratch. I have been in there and the police cells are appalling."

Mr Jamieson said: "West Midlands Police's plans protect the number of publicly accessible front desks in the Black Country and across the whole West Midlands.

"It is also important that staff have modern facilities to help tackle emerging crimes, whilst saving money to protect police officer posts.

"I am reviewing the chief constable's estates proposals. I will make a decision after scrutinising them."

Other stations to close in the Black Country, under the proposals, are at Sedgley, Oldbury, Bilston Prouds Lane, Tipton, Aldridge, Wednesfield, Smethwick and Wednesbury.

Full house for bingo with The Beast

Mark Labbett, AKA The Beast, from TV's The Chae meets fan Sue Blackwell at Shipley's in Dudley

DOZENS gathered to see 'The Beast' from popular teatime TV quiz show The Chase during his first visit to Dudley.

Mark Labbett was in the area to announce call out the bingo numbers at Shipleys in Market Place which was packed with 30 fans of the hit ITV show who were eager for a chat, photograph and signature with their favourite 'Chaser'.

The 52-year-old TV personality shot to fame one of four brain boxes who take on teams on The Chase, which he joined in 2009.

But the Beast is not quite a big as he was, as he told the Dudley audience: "Just to let you all know, I have lost two and a half stone in weight in the last six months so I am holding up my trousers at the moment.

"It is so good to see so many people here enjoying their bingo and it is fantastic that there is a place like this that people can come in and enjoy themselves.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Big Toddle time at the zoo again

CHILDREN are invited to take part in this year's Barnardo's Big Toddle at Dudley Zoo. The Castle Hill attraction will again be hosting the charity's annual sponsored walk for under-fives.

The event, one of the biggest organised Toddles in the UK, is on June 12 and 13. Admission is £7.50 but free for toddlers, and will include free refreshments and children's entertainment. A warm-up at 10.30am is followed by the walk at 11am with medals for all participants.

Register for your Big Toddle pack at www.bigtoddle.uk or call 0800 008 7005.

New nursery will bring more jobs

A NEW pre-school and nursery is being built in Dudley.

Owners of Little Kids Kingdom, in King Street, say they will need around 23 members of staff once the project is complete by the end of April.

Recruiters are currently working to fill managerial and carer positions at the two-unit, 6,000 sq ft, operation, which will look to provide places for up to 90 children.

Owner Stacey Thompson said: "We are in construction stages at the moment. It is two units that we have taken on."

Hospital's 'boat' race on dry land

A HOSPITAL charity is staging an Easter Bunny boat race on dry land.

Supporters of Dudley Group NHS Charity will be using a rowing machine in the main reception at Russells Hall Hospital for the fundraiser on April 4. They will be wearing fancy dress for the rowing relay in an effort to raise funds for the charity's End of Life Campaign. Some of the funds will go towards special LED sky ceiling panels for some of the hospital's rooms.

Donate via www.justgiving.com/fundraising/easterbunnyboatrace

Businesses at airport targeted by thieves

BURGLARS have targeted businesses at Halfpenny Green Airport, prompting a police investigation.

Units at the airport, near Bobbington, have been broken into by thieves.

Airport acting operations manager Tony Rowlands confirmed units at the site had been broken into but said the airport remained open.

Anyone with information can call police on 101 quoting incident number 121 of March 16.

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IN MY VIEW
with Mark Andrews

Badger cull issue is not all black and white

UNSURPRISINGLY, public opinion is divided over plans to extend the badger cull to include Staffordshire.

On the one hand, the animal rights activists say that the mass killing of wildlife is barbaric and unscientific. On the other are the farmers, who say that thousands more cattle will have to be slaughtered unless something is done about bovine TB which is being spread by badgers.

Experience tells me it's wise to sit on the fence with this one. That's the trouble with badgers. It's never a black and white issue.

■■■

LET'S get this right. West Midlands Police no longer has police stations in Walsall and Dudley, two of the biggest towns in the force area. It is also planning to shut down a further 24 stations, which will leave many of our suburban and village communities without a base, saving the force an estimated £5 million a year.

Police and crime commissioner David Jamieson says the cuts are necessary to protect the number of officers as the force faces a squeeze on finances.

"It's important to remember policing is about people not buildings," he says.

I was almost convinced. But then we get the bombshell that they are planning to spend £56 million on refurbishing the police stations in Wolverhampton and West Bromwich, as well as completely redeveloping the one at Brierley Hill.

I'm sure these new-look police stations will be very nice, but I can't help but think that anybody who gets beaten up, mugged or stabbed in the centre of Walsall or Dudley would prefer a police station within walking distance. Even if it hasn't had a refurb.

■■■

WHAT is it with kids today? According to a survey, they are turning their back on alcohol and bingeing instead on coffee.

One in five millennials describes themselves as teetotal, and those that do drink average just two-and-a-half pints a week. Which explains why there were 6,000 pub closures between 2011 and 2016, and 2,000 new coffee shops opening over the same time. I suppose that is a good thing, but I do wonder about this generation.

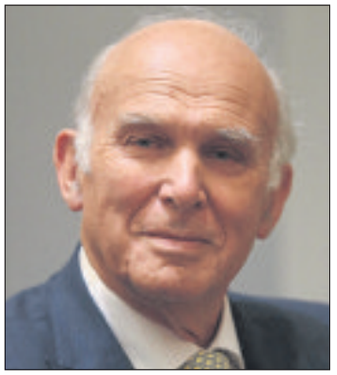
They wander around, headphones in the ears, oblivious to what is going on around them; bottle of water in the one and mobile phone in the other. And their idea of a good time involves sitting in Starbucks quaffing bucket-sized mugs of extra-strong coffee, often glued to their computer screens. Probably posting stuff on Twitter about Brexit or something.

Their parents must be tearing their hair out, hoping they will grow out of it.

As the new 'Millionaire' host Clarkson gets some tips

Stephen Hawking – admired, cherished and respected by so many millions

Jeremy Clarkson – back on TV after altercation ended his BBC career



Vince Cable – says many older folk who opted for Brexit, "driven by nostalgia"

Best advice Jeremy: Watch what you say

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES

AS part of his readmission to terrestrial television and civilised society, Jeremy Clarkson is to be the new host of Who Wants to be a Millionaire (ITV). In view of the unpleasant altercation with a producer which ended his BBC career, the great and good have been queueing up to offer the former Top Gear presenter advice. If Clarkson can avoid shouting "You lazy Irish ----!" at Celtic colleagues and punching them in the mouth, that'll help.

SO farewell, Stephen Hawking. Never in the field of modern science has one man been so admired, cherished and respected by so many millions of people who hadn't a clue what he was on about.

I AM taken to task for suggesting that in Black Country dialect, Barclays Bank might be pronounced "bonk." A reader insists that while "bonk" would be used to describe a hill or steep rise, a high-street bank is "bank." To make things entirely clear, he adds that "bankers " is pronounced as " them robbdoggin' piggantin' wammels." I am much obliged.

VINCE Cable says many older folk who opted for Brexit, "were driven by a nostalgia for a world where passports were blue, faces were white and the world was coloured imperial pink." Really? And how many older citizens has the Lib-Dem leader interviewed to arrive at this curious conclusion? Might it not be that older voters remember voting for a free-trade area of six nations, ended up in a superstate of 27 countries and decided this was no place for the UK to be? To lump all Brexit voters into the white-face, pink-map brigade is as foolish as suggesting that young people voted Remain because they're all a bunch of wimps, frit to death of change and terrified by a challenge. Clearly, a ludicrous notion.

I REFERRED recently to the strange names used in television crime dramas. (Cormoran Strike, Kip Glaspie, etc) Walking past a canal I noticed the site where chemical toilets are discharged. What a great name for a detective it would make. Introducing Elsan Point.

THIS eternally slow spring reminds me of a conversation with an old chap on the harbour wall at Axmouth some years ago when the rain was hammering down from a leaden March sky rather like this week's. "Summer must come," he intoned with a wise smile. That year, it didn't.

AFTER campaigns, such as March4Women, NotMyJob and International Women's Day, I am made shamefully aware how many women seem to be desperately unhappy about the unfairness of being female and, presumably, think being a bloke is much easier. I am therefore delighted to announce the Tofad Programme. It is inspired by the "empathy bellies" worn by some caring, considerate men who want to know how it feels to be pregnant, and hobble around wearing a padded suit with a weighted, swollen abdomen. Under the Tofad Programme, women can become a man for 24 hours. Firstly, they will be surgically equipped with a fully functioning male thingy. Next, they will get a large injection of testosterone which will not only make the thingy work, but also make them fantasise about sex 20 times a day which is apparently the average for a young male (in later life one's thoughts turn to flatpack). And then, perked up by the male hormone and equipped with this curious appendage which cannot decide whether it's a battering ram or the last turkey in the shop, they will be released into society.

I BELIEVE women would come away from the Tofad (Todger For A Day) experience with a much better understanding of the male of the species. They might come to see men not as rampaging beasts but as models of restraint. On the other hand, they may thoroughly enjoy the experience and refuse to hand back the equipment. The NHS has the devil of a job getting old crutches back, so you can imagine the problem.

WAS anyone else of a certain age surprised by the oft-repeated safety warnings from the gunpowder makers in Lucy Worsley's Fireworks for a Tudor Queen (BBC4) ? When I were a lad, you could buy a chemistry set at your local toy shop which not only contained the ingredients for gunpowder but also the instructions on how to blend it. While the Beeb's experts mixed gunpowder cautiously with a non-metallic stirrer, we merrily whisked ours up with a teaspoon. It really is amazing that so many men now drawing a pension have a full complement of fingers and toes.

STILL on weapons of mass destruction, how strange it is that the NHS, which is constantly wagging its finger and warning us of the long-term dangers of booze and baccy, waited a week before suggesting it might be an idea for people close to the Salisbury nerve-agent attack to wash their clothes.

TALKING POINT

Blink and all our city shops will be gone . . .

Years ago when my daughter was small I would make a lot of her clothes. I always found sewing quite relaxing.

Nothing complicated, just simple little dresses in fun material. She loved them. But I remember when her age suddenly – it seemed that way to me as her mother – went into double figures she asked that instead of home-made could she shop with her friends and go to the 'teenage clothes shops'. This was not so much to buy, but more to check out the latest fashions and have a giggle with her friends. That was when 'going into town' was a fun day out.

How things have changed over the years and sadly now quicker than ever. So many stores seem to be struggling and numerous branches closing down. For years we have worried about empty shops in Wolverhampton but if the big chains like New Look and Debenhams, are struggling what hope is there for the small independent shops?

I know internet shopping has taken over our lives, why not buy sitting at home on the settee with your tablet on your knee? But surely this takes the fun out of looking for and trying on garments.

Go into many town or city centres today and the number of people shopping is low, although there always seems to be plenty feeding their faces in the seemingly endless number of food outlets.

With grandchildren now I looked around for a shop to buy some material for a fancy dress costume. Where have all the shops gone that sell this sort of thing?

Yes Wolverhampton market on a Tuesday has always been great for material but a long trek in a lunch hour. Hopefully when it moves closer to the city centre that will help. The same with food shopping. There are no large food stores in the Mander Centre where you can pick up a shop. Iceland stepped into the breach after Tesco closed and now stocks a wider range admittedly but apart from that, one has to use the bus or car to travel out of the city.

All the major stores now seem to be based on retail parks, very useful as parking is easy. And maybe that is a big part of the problem. I work in the city centre but if not would I actually drive into Wolverhampton and find somewhere to park to do my shopping when many of the things I am looking for are no longer there? I don't think so.

And if I want a coffee – they are expensive – sorry to be mean but I would have one at home before I shop. Yes the internet is great but our town and city centres are slowly dying. Blink and they will be gone. Such a shame.

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Big business destroys towns not homeless

I MUST take issue with Stephen Fellows' recent letter headed 'Time to get tough on homeless', which relates to an issue close to my heart.

My father inherited a thriving newsagents, tobacconist and grocery business in Tipton having returned from France and Germany in 1945. He would start work before 6am, snatching lunch and dinner when he could and closed the shop at 8pm. He would then count the takings and work on the accounts for several hours, working six days per week.

He didn't get a holiday with his family for 15 years. He and mother had four children and two elderly ailing parents to look after.

Self-service stores began to flourish and despite dad's best efforts, the business had to close. Dad wept because he had no money to buy Christmas presents for us.

We lived at the shop, so we could no longer live there. It was only by the grace of a sympathetic councillor that we managed to get a council house, otherwise dad would have become homeless and the family would have been split up.

This mirrors the decline of the Dudley shopping centre which Stephen Fellows blames on the homeless.

Misfortune can befall anyone, forcing them into poverty and homelessness. It is the greed of the conglomerates and the massive shopping centres that destroy town centres.

The homeless are the victims, not the cause.

MICHAEL CLIFF
Dudley

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST
Dudley Chronicle, Chronicle Editorial, 51-53 Queen Street Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

EMAIL
dudley.chrons@expressandstar.co.uk

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Should not encourage beggars

I SUPPORT Stephen Fellows of Sedgley who stated 'Is it not time that the council and police get tough on the homeless people taking over our doorways and towns.'

I counted five allegedly homeless people in Stourbridge complete with their litter of beds spread over the footpath which people had to walk around. On speaking to one I was told if I was not going to give him some money then I could **** off. Another I saw getting into a car to have a smoke.

I take it all these people are on benefits of some sort, so why do they have to downgrade and leave litter in our towns and cities, much to the affront of local people and visitors alike ?

Well said Mr Fellows of Sedgley, I willingly give to local charities but never directly to these people as it just encourages begging on our streets.

ALAN THOMAS
Stourbridge

Town already has at least 11 CCTV cameras

WHY are Halesowen BID and Councillor Bills asking for CCTV cameras in Halesowen Town?

I walked around the town on Tuesday and counted 11 cameras.

Four are on the High St, including one right outside the William Shenstone pub looking at the entrance doors.

Ten of these cameras are 360 degree PTZ (pan, tilt, zoom) and one fixed view at the bus station crossing.

Whilst one does not now expect 24 hour monitoring, they must still be recording and will have a rolling 30 day recording schedule. Can we be assured that these cameras are still working and data from them is recorded?

PETER ASH
Retired CCTV engineer, Halesowen

What'cha Gonna Do About It

I'M a writer and musician, finishing a detailed book about The Small Faces on tour 1965-1969.

I'm looking to speak with fans who remember a gig on March 18, 1967 at The Gaumont in Wolverhampton. On the bill were Roy Orbison, The Small Faces, Paul and Barry Ryan, Sonny Child and TNT, The Settlers and The Robb Storme Group.

There have been some big-hitting musicians involved with interviews so far including Jon Anderson (Yes) Simon Kirke (Free), Arthur Brown and Nick Lowe.

I'm interested to hear of any stories or anecdotes relating to any of the above acts, in particular The Small Faces. Although the event took place over 50 years ago, I'm sure there'll be someone who has a story to tell. Hope you can help.

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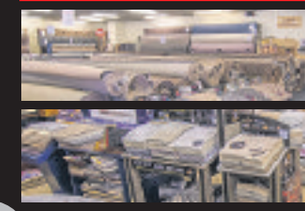

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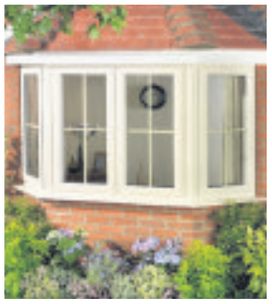

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Cheryl lost 15 stone but didn't give up curry

AT her heaviest she was tipping the scales at almost 25 stone filling up on piles of cheese and onion sandwiches, takeaways and jars of peanut butter.

Now mother-of-two Cheryl Roberts, from Stourbridge, is half the woman she used to be after losing 15 stone – and all without ditching her beloved curries too.

The 39-year-old Gig Mill Primary School dinner lady decided to start shedding the pounds properly in 2014 joining a slimming group and hitting the gym.

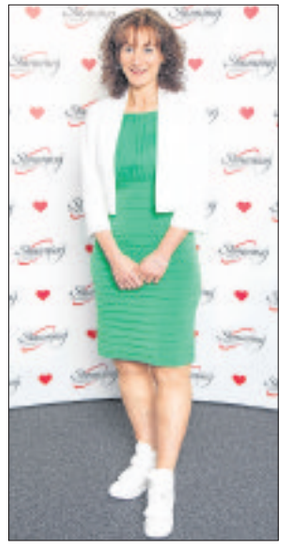
In just four years she now looks a different woman and is down to 10 stone and a dress size 8, or 10 depending on the shop.

It is a far cry from when Cheryl was almost a size 30 and would dread going shopping for clothes at Merry Hill.

In the past the former Ridgewood High School pupil said she used to love filling up on her favourite cheese and onion sandwiches and peanut butter.

And when out drinking she would down pints of cider followed by takeaways late at night.

Then – Cheryl Roberts used to weigh almost 25 stone



And now – Cheryl has lost 15 stone and looks a different woman

Curry

But now her diet consists of homemade healthy curries and she has switched from pints of cider to slimline gin and tonics.

Mrs Roberts said: "For breakfast I would smother peanut butter on four rounds of white bread every morning."

"I did used to like going out for a drink but I knew I couldn't carry on drinking eight or nine pints of cider a night."

With the support of her two sons Jack, 15, and Max, 11, Cheryl lost five stone by hitting the gym at the Fitness Factory in Wollaston before joining Slimming World in 2014.

She hit double figures in weight loss after being with the Norton group for two years and battling through an underactive thyroid to hit the overall 15 stone loss.

The hard work was recognised when she was nominated as a candidate for Slimming World's Consultant Slimmer of the Year 2018 competition – which later saw her attend the semi-finals at the club's head office in Derbyshire in February.

Cheryl was presented with a certificate and a glass trophy by Slimming World's CEO Caryl Richards.

She now supports 45 others on their own weight loss journeys at the Slimming World group in Norton, which she now runs.

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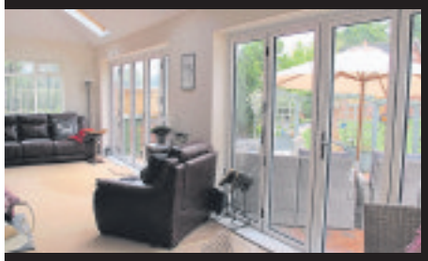

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Restaurants and shops go to auction

A FORMER Indian restaurant in Stourbridge is being sold at auction, among several Black Country business properties.

The old Monsoon Bengal Cuisine premises in Lawnswood Road, Wordsley, is laid out to provide 48 covers. It is described as on the first floor having potential for conversion to a self-contained flat, subject to planning permission.

The property has a guide price in excess of £100,000 in SDL Auctions Bigwood's next auction at Aston Villa's Villa Park ground on March 28.

A Stourbridge development site, which already has planning permission for two alternative developments, is another one of the lots. The land at 101 Birmingham Street offers a freehold development opportunity on a site of around 0.78 acres. The planning permissions relate to a development of restaurants, hot-food takeaways or other retail uses with nine apartments above and the other three units for food or retail purposes. The L-shaped site fronts on to Birmingham Street and is next to the River Stour. It has a guide of more than £500,000.

In Brierley Hill, 52 High Street is a prominent freehold town centre retail unit, which currently operates as a cafe trading as Jenny's. It has a guide price of £100,000.

It's not unusual to enjoy Kenny's show

Kenny Craig entertains the 50+ club at Wall Heath including, from left, Liz Austin, Colin Storey, Norma Beal and Marlene Penn

BLACK Country entertainer Kenny Craig took to the Wall Heath Community Centre to give the monthly 50 plus club a special show featuring the songs of Elvis Presley and Tom Jones – after meeting the latter superstar.

Professional entertainer Kenny Craig, from Sedgley, said: "I think Tom Jones is just a great vocalist and he is 77 years old. I met him at Beacon Radio in Wolverhampton once when he had got his new single at the time, Boy From Nowhere, out.

"The group have their meetings every second Wednesday and they do things for the community. They saw me at The Lodge in Dudley and then the community centre asked me if I could do their annual show at Wall Heath."

The singer's performance went down a treat with those who run the club. A total of 37 members of the club, which has been running for around 11 years, turned up to see Kenny Craig after his Christmas show was cancelled due to poor weather conditions.

Social secretary and treasurer Jan Store said: "He got the members of the club up and dancing."

Call to shut stores in honour of the fallen

SHOPS across the UK should be closed for an extra hour on Remembrance Sunday to commemorate 100 years since the First World War ended, according to a group of MPs.

Labour MP John Spellar has supported a Parliamentary motion on the issue and says such a move would allow shop staff to attend memorial events on November 11.

Commemorations have been organised throughout 2018 to mark the final year of the First World War. More than 800,000 British and Commonwealth soldiers died during the four-year conflict.

Mr Spellar, MP for Warley, said: "The 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War is a special occasion. It is only right that shop workers should be able to attend local memorial events." So far 45 MPs have supported the early day motion, including Walsall South MP Valerie Vaz. Another motion has been submitted by Labour MP Kate Hoey, who wants to see shops close for the entire day.

Two hours free parking aims to boost shops in town centres

SHOPPERS across Dudley could get two hours of free parking in town centres.

Dudley Council's cabinet was last night (Wednesday) expected to pass a proposal which would see the current offer of one hour free parking across council-owned car parks in Dudley doubled.

The anticipated move has been hailed by Dudley Council leader Patrick Harley, who said: "People have told us that two hours of free parking will make a considerable difference and we are looking forward to rolling this out across the borough from the start of next month.

"This move will provide a huge boost to retailers. Dudley is the only council across the whole of the West Midlands providing this incentive and is bucking the national trend, which has seen many local authorities increase car parking charges, using the motorist as a cash cow."

Councillor Karen Shakespeare, cabinet member for environmental services, said: "Again we are listening to what the people of Dudley borough have to say and we are extending the free parking to two hours to give shoppers longer in our town centres."

Sir Lenny leads Let's Play drama initiative

SIR Lenny Henry has launched an initiative aimed at encouraging schoolchildren to get involved in drama and the theatre.

The Dudley-born actor and comedian marked the start of Let's Play, which is a scheme by the National Theatre.

He voiced his support for the programme aiming to get children involved in all aspects of theatre production. It will commission new plays with songs and music for children and will provide teachers with training and development.

Sir Lenny made his National Theatre debut in 2011 in Shakespeare's The Comedy of Errors and is now a member of the National Theatre's board of trustees.

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Wolves fans help to net £2m and charity record

Team mates and fans show their support during the first home game

Fans have rallied in support

Carl Ikeme – diagnosed last year

WOLVES fans' support for Carl Ikeme helped Cure Leukaemia achieve a record-breaking year smashing the £2 million mark for the first time.

Cash raised for the cancer charity will allow an expansion of a new haematology centre at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham to go ahead.

Wolves and their supporters have been thanked for helping make 2017 the charity's most successful year. The charity reached its goal of raising an extra £1m during the year to make the hospital expansion a reality – around 10 per cent of which was raised through the Carl Ikeme appeal.

The Wolves fanbase was left stunned when the popular goalkeeper was diagnosed with acute leukaemia last summer.

Shoot-out

Several initiatives have been organised since, bringing in thousands of pounds for the charity, which operates with just five members of staff.

A 24-hour penalty shoot-out was held at Molineux in August in support of Ikeme and the charity. A bucket collection before the first home game of the season against Middlesbrough brought in £8,000. Cash was also raised through proceeds from the printing of goalkeeper shirts with 'Ikeme 1' on the back.

The total for the #TeamKemes Just Giving page currently stands at more than £110,000. A total of £2.2 million was raised during the year for Cure Leukaemia, including the extra £1 million which will see the internationally renowned Centre for Clinical Haematology (CCH) at the hospital double its capacity and treat 20,000 patients a year.

The sizeable donation will make up almost a third of the total cost of the £3.4 million hospital project.

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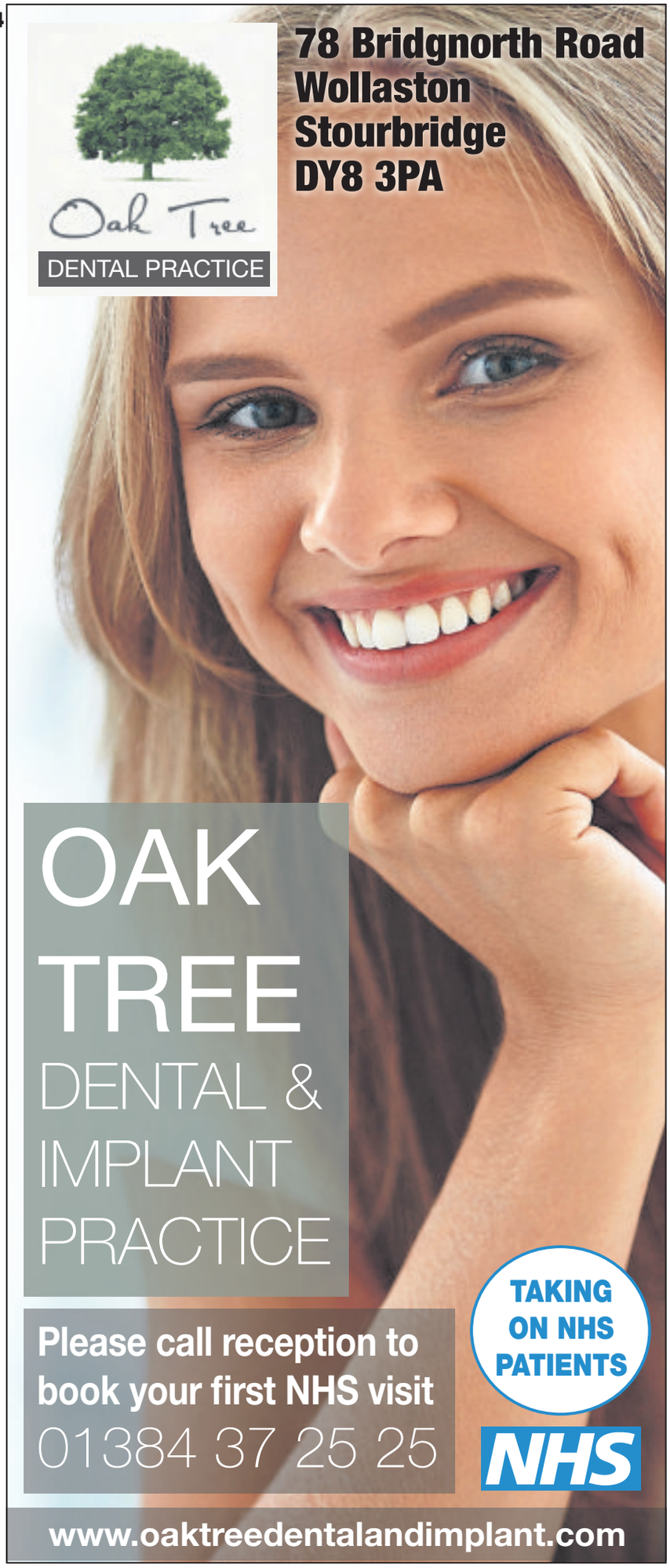

Diversion in Wolverhampton city centre

TRAVEL disruption in Wolverhampton city centre has begun, with the start of a £33 million scheme to extend the Midland Metro tram line.

Workmen will prepare the road and lay down track from the Wolverhampton St Georges stop to the city's railway station – closing Pipers Row until the summer, with traffic diverted along other roads. Most of the work will entail preparing the road, with the tracks not due to arrive until June. The route will be open for trams in two years.

Motorists coming off the Bilston Road island to the city centre now face a diversion from Bilston Street, around past the library and on to Garrick Street. With Pipers Row closed, a bus-only restriction on to Market Street has been lifted. Vehicles then access Tower Street and Castle Street, including the NCP car park, on a one-way circular road system.

On exiting, vehicles are directed down Queen Street and Berry Street, behind the Grand Theatre.

Taxpayers get bill after council inquiry into 'morons' jibe

DUDLEY taxpayers have been left with a £1,700 bill for an investigation into a Ukip councillor's online rant.

Bill Etheridge was hauled before the town council's standards committee after he posted Facebook videos branding Labour councillors 'a procession of morons and imbeciles'.

The Sedgley councillor refused to turn up to the hearing, but in his absence was found to have breached the code of conduct. It followed a complaint by Labour group leader Councillor Pete Lowe, who argued that Mr Etheridge's comments had been 'threatening and disrespectful'.

Following a request from Mr Etheridge, Mohammed Farooq, the council's monitoring officer, revealed investigating officer John Austin's fee amounted to £1,286.45. A further cost of £413.55 is said to have been incurred due to council officers' involvement in the investigation.

Massive

Mr Etheridge, also a West Midlands MEP, said: "This is a massive bill of £1,700 for a witch hunt to close down free speech. The only punishment possible is a vote to censure me. I can't be kicked off any committees since my work as an MEP prevents me from sitting on any in the first place. Labour group leader Pete Lowe knew this and yet still went ahead with the complaint at great expense to Dudley taxpayers. That money could have been spent on things like tree maintenance and road safety."

Mr Etheridge posted two online videos following a heated full council meeting last year. He called the Labour group a 'procession of morons and imbeciles'. He labelled them 'Socialist do-gooder bleeding heart Communist rat bags' and 'pathetic tin pot nobodies'. He referred to the 'crony Mayor in his Dick Whittington outfit',

He said Dudley Council House should be demolished, and that he 'wouldn't care if councillors were inside' at the time.

In his report, Mr Austin said that Councillor Etheridge had failed to value colleagues and 'engage with them in an appropriate manner' and had failed to 'treat people including officers and the mayor with respect'. He accepted Mr Etheridge's 'ill chosen' comments about the Council House being demolished had been 'tongue in cheek'. Mr Austin added that Councillor Etheridge could be ordered to attend a training course.

All wrapped up for rally

Richard Cradock from Kingswinford on his 1951 Ferguson TEA20

HARDY farmers and vintage vehicle enthusiasts took to the roads for the annual Shropshire Vintage Tractor Run.

Farm vehicles – many of them well over half a century old – were driven around Shropshire and through the streets of Bridgnorth in the fundraiser for the Midlands Air Ambulance.

It was the 20th anniversary of the event, which is organised by the Bridgnorth Vintage Machinery Club.

Organisers had been expecting between 100 and 150 vintage tractors to take part but the bad weather meant only around 60 arrived for the event. After a drive through the countryside, the tractors lined up in Bridgnorth High Street over lunchtime before the second half of the run.

A continental market in the High Street, organised by Bridgnorth Town Council, was due to take place during the event, but was cancelled due to the wintry weather.

Mr David Spruce, one of the organisers, thanked those who had turned out in the wintery weather. The old tractors had none of the benefits of modern day vehicles like cabs and heating.

Police are helped by Zeus and Optimus Crime

SCHOOLCHILDREN in Oldbury and Dudley got the rare chance to name local police vans after both schools picked titles fit for the gods.

'Zeus' has been printed on the side of one of West Midlands Police vans, thanks to the creativity by pupils at Tividale Community Primary School in Oldbury, while 'Jupiter' was dreamt up by children at Priory Primary in Dudley. Hundreds of children from local schools entered the competition, organised by the Police and Crime Commissioner and West Midlands Police, to name its latest vehicles.

The entries put forward by the pupils were all excellent, judges said. Other names chosen included Optimus Crime which came from Daylesford Infant in Solihull.

£350m boost to kick-start house building

THE West Midlands has been handed a £350 million war chest to start the region's biggest house building programme in decades.

Announcing the funding boost, Chancellor Philip Hammond said the region had committed to delivering 215,000 homes by 2031. It includes a £100m land and housing fund for the West Midlands Combined Authority, which will deliver around 8,000 homes on the Walsall to Wolverhampton rail corridor.

West Midlands Mayor Andy Street, said the deal was 'a huge milestone' that would help 'relieve pressure' on the greenbelt. That has been a major issue in Halesowen where campaigners have feared pressure for homes would result in developments along the town's rural fringe.

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Concern as more young men carry knives 'for protection'

MORE than 1,600 people were cautioned or sentenced for carrying knives and offensive weapons in the West Midlands and Staffordshire in one year.

Police say most of the people caught last year were young men aged 15 to 19 who claimed they were carrying the weapons for protection.

The number penalised for possession peaked over the two regions last year – with a total of 1,673 offenders – according to figures from the Home Office, the highest in the last eight years. The level dropped to 1,184 in 2014 but has since steadily risen.

It brings into question the success of recent Government legislation, which sees people given a mandatory prison sentence when caught possessing a knife for a second time. The Chronicle's sister newspaper the Express & Star is campaigning for offenders not to be given a second chance.

Superintendent Ian Parnell said: "The consequences of carrying knives can be catastrophic. We've seen people suffer very serious injuries, while offenders can expect to spend many years behind bars.

Shocking

"If we look at the level of knife crime across the area we can see that although the statistics have increased recently – mirroring the national picture – it comes following a considerable decline leading up to the last few years.There is still much work to do.

"The people we find most often in possession of a knife in public are young men aged between 15 and 19.

"A common excuse we hear is that it's for their 'protection' but that is a total fallacy and it's shocking how many times young men are seriously hurt by the very knife they are carrying."

Cinema will be dementia friendly zone

A DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY community cinema has been launched in Coseley.

The first screening by community organisation East Coseley Big Local will be on April 17 in Darkhouse Baptist Church in Darkhouse Lane. The movie is yet to be confirmed.

It is part of efforts to support people living with dementia, their families and carers to continue to participate in entertainment.

The cinema will be open to the wider community but the screenings will be enhanced to suit the needs of people living with dementia. Email neil@eastcoseleybiglocal.org.uk to book a place.

Big Local is funded by the Big Lottery Fund and managed by the Local Trust after being allocated £1 million by the fund in 2011.

Widow's memories of her hero husband

Margaret Blakeway with a photo of husband Derek during his days with the police in the Black Country

HE spent 32 years in the police force and once saved a woman and her baby from a burning flat.

But Derek Blakeway will be most remembered for his love for classical music and Mozart, according to his proud widow, Margaret.

Scores of Mr Blakeway's friends and family turned out at Lawrence Lane Methodist Church in Cradley Heath last Monday to say their final farewells to the popular 82-year-old.

Margaret, 79, said the couple would have celebrated their 59th wedding anniversary next month.

"He was a very intelligent man and he was well-read. He loved every type of classical music. He really liked people. He was a very well-rounded man."

On April 1 1964, Mr Blakeway, who lived in Cradley Heath, made the headlines for his bravery when he saved a mother and her three-month-old baby from a fire in Cape Hill, Smethwick.

Mrs Blakeway said: "I could smell the smoke on his uniform. He did not think he had done anything out of the normal. I was proud. I kept associating that with the fact we had got a six-month-old baby."

Mr Blakeway, a constable in Smethwick and West Bromwich between 1955 and 1987, was a keen sportsman, playing football and cricket. He is also survived by his sons, John and Michael, and granddaughter Alice.

Hard-hitting report looks at problems

ALMOST 5,000 people in the Black Country and Birmingham are homeless.

Also more than two-thirds of people are overweight (68 per cent) and in the West Midlands there are just 75 jobs for every 100 residents.

Those are among the findings of a hard-hitting report released by the University of Wolverhampton.

The new report aims to help tackle some of the biggest issues facing communities across the region.

The findings were uncovered at a launch event for Communities Uncovered, with a purpose to examine issues affecting the Black Country.

Dr Steve Iafrati, a lecturer at the university who led the research, said: "This report provides an accessible way to identify areas of need and to begin to recognise the ways in which certain groups may need supporting and that certain cycles may need breaking.

"One of the outcomes of the report is to identify a range of indicators and challenges facing various geographical areas within Birmingham and the Black Country.

"With this information, it is possible for the foundation to consider strategies for future funding, including which areas and themes to prioritise."

Sense launching new arts festival

AN arts festival organised by deafblind people is to be launched in Birmingham. National disability charity Sense with Edgbaston's Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), has unveiled plans for the new arts festival from May 18 to 20. Sensibility Festival is a celebration of the senses. Visit macbirmingham.co.uk for more.

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Big day at the palace for former Mayor of Dudley

FOR years he has been dedicated to serving his community and now Councillor Steve Waltho has been royally honoured for his tireless campaign of work in the Dudley borough with an MBE.

The 62-year-old, who represents St Thomas's ward, picked up the royal accolade from Prince Charles for services to local government and the community at Buckingham Palace on Thursday.

Mr Waltho, from Kingswinford, said: "It was a great experience I have to say.

"It was something that was never expected and a really lovely experience for me and the family on the day.

"I did not get over excited about – I am too old for that now I think. It really was an honour to receive it.

Amazing

"It is amazing the way the thing is put together because it is done with military precision."

Despite the trip to Buckingham Palace, the former mayor of Dudley has been determined not to let the award go to his head and has been back out in 'the real world' canvassing to maintain his seat.

Mr Waltho said: "The first thing Prince Charles said was 'when were you mayor of Dudley' and I thought how does he remember that?

"I said 'a couple of years ago' and he then he asked 'are you still a councillor' – he was very knowledgeable. I told him I was actually up for grabs this May.

"My dear wife Jayne went with me and my dear sister Alison – who was delighted about it all – and my eldest son, Jay. The award is sat very proudly in our little display cupboard in our lounge at the moment. My wife said 'you can't get used to this can you?'.

"The only time I felt a little bit nervous was the final bit and waiting in the queue. You think 'It is nearly my turn and I hope nothing goes wrong or I don't fall over or anything'.

"It was just a very interesting experience and I am just glad my family got the chance to sample that as well with me."

Wife Jayne took to social media to celebrate her husband's success.

She shared news of the London visit on Facebook, with swarms of well-wishers.

She said: "Proud, proud, proud of this wonderful, amazing man. The Black Country came to Buckingham Palace."

Councillor Waltho receives his royal accolade from Prince Charles and a brief chat

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Looking out for early signs of glaucoma

LIZ CONNOR speaks to optometrist Dr Josie Forte about the UK's biggest cause of irreversible blindness

GOING blind is a frightening thought, yet many of us know very little about glaucoma.

Known as "the silent thief of sight", the condition currently affects as many as 700,000 people across the UK, with some 50 per cent of cases remaining undiagnosed.

Glaucoma is a pretty common eye condition – it's thought that by 2035, one million people will suffer from it – and usually occurs when the optic nerve, which connects the eye to the brain, becomes damaged as a result of fluid building up in the front area of the eye, which in turn increases pressure within the eyeball.

If left unchecked, it can cause irreversible damage to vision, so it's important to diagnose and treat glaucoma early. The only way to do this is to go for frequent eye checks, otherwise you could be risking your sight without knowing it.

Almost 80 per cent of people would choose sight as the sense they would least like to lose, yet many don't visit the optician until something goes wrong with their eyes or sight.

Here, Specsavers optometrist, Dr Josie Forte, shares seven little-known facts about glaucoma...

GLAUCOMA CAN BE SYMPTOMLESS

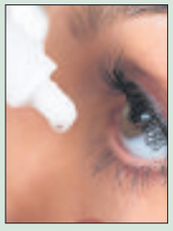
People with 20/20 vision can have glaucoma and not realise it. You may not notice any difference in your vision, because it tends to affect your peripheral vision first - which you may not even be aware of. It's only when it progresses to moderate or advanced glaucoma that people start to notice changes to their vision quality. "Regular eye tests are so important," says Dr Forte, "as they potentially enable a diagnosis before any noticeable visual loss has occurred."

YOUR FAMILY HISTORY COULD AFFECT YOUR RISK OF DEVELOPING IT

"Age, family history and even ethnicity all play a role," explains Dr Forte. "If you're over 40, have a family history of glaucoma, are short-sighted or diabetic, you have a higher risk of glaucoma and should mention this at your next sight test."

PEOPLE OF AFRICAN, CARIBBEAN OR ASIAN ORIGIN ARE AT A HIGHER RISK

It's often unclear why a build-up of pressure in the eye happens, but research has found that ethnicity can increase or decrease the risk, with glaucoma more common in people of African, Caribbean or Asian origin.



EYE TESTS ARE QUICK AND PAINLESS

Glaucoma can usually be detected during a routine eye test, often before it causes any noticeable symptoms. The test does not hurt or feel uncomfortable, and should only take around 15 minutes. "Tests involve the optometrist looking at the appearance of the main nerve in the eye, a measurement of the pressure in the eye, and checking the field of vision," says Dr Forte.

GLAUCOMA CAN AFFECT ANYONE AT ANY AGE

"It is not an age-related sight loss condition," says Dr Forte. "Primary open angle glaucoma becomes more common as you get older, and although uncommon below the age of 40, it's important to get checked for the early signs."

GLAUCOMA CAN BE MANAGED

It's not possible to reverse any loss of vision that occurred before glaucoma was diagnosed, but treatment can help to stop any further visual impairment. Regardless of whether somebody with glaucoma has noticed damage to their vision or not, the condition can often be managed with specific eye drops. "These are normally prescribed by an ophthalmologist at an eye hospital," explains Dr Forte, "commonly after referral by an optometrist."

THE NHS FUNDS SIGHT TESTS FOR GLAUCOMA AT-RISK GROUPS

"If a close relative has glaucoma, you have a greater risk of developing it," stresses Josie, "so your routine eye test may be funded by the NHS. If you think you might qualify, speak to your optician for more information."

Depression is treatable and adults can provide plenty of support for children

Some 20 per cent of adolescents experience a mental health problem in any given year

Support for youngsters with mental health issues

Report by Liz Connor

STRESS, anxiety and depression can be tough enough for anyone to deal with, but couple that with the hormonal changes that teenagers face during puberty, and mental health issues can feel like an overwhelming and unconquerable burden.

For parents, it isn't always easy to differentiate between 'normal' teenage angst and a more serious problem, but research suggests 20 per cent of adolescents experience a mental health problem in any given year.

Fear of being mocked or not being taken seriously, or a simple confusion about the changes they're experiencing, can often stop young people from reaching out for help – which is why it's vital parents understand how to best to spot the signs of depression in teens, and what to do if this happen.

Fortunately, depression is treatable and there are plenty of things adults can do to support their children through the process.

Here, Dr Hayley van Zwanenberg, a child and adolescent psychiatrist for Priory Healthcare, explains more about the early warning signs of teenage depression, and how parents can help.

SPOTTING THE SIGNS

While occasional mood swings or acting out is part of growing up, depression is something different, explains Dr Zwanenberg. "Look out for a teenager that isolates themselves from friends and family, and a constant low mood and lack of energy that may manifest in struggling to do anything other than the minimum they have to do every day," she says.

"Also, be aware of loss of motivation, such as abandoning extra-curricular activities and hobbies, and negative thoughts like: 'I'm a boring person and rubbish at everything'."

Dr Zwanenberg explains that some depressed teens may also show signs of self-harm, changes in appetite (either not hungry or comfort-eating) and poor concentration, leading to a decrease in academic performance..

Listen, listen, listen (and don't judge)

If your teen starts talking to you about how they are feeling, make an effort to really listen to them without being overbearing in your concern. "If a parent is worried about a young person, it's best to sit down calmly with them and explain they are worried, as they do not seem themselves," says Dr Zwanenberg. "Parents and carers need to be careful that the young person does not take this as criticism, as depression can often feel like carrying a sieve in your mind: any positive information is washed down the sink, while anything negative is caught and focused on, reinforcing other pessimistic thoughts."

It's vital parents understand how to best to spot the signs of depression in teens, and what to do if this happens

HELP IN A WAY THAT THEY ARE COMFORTABLE WITH

Often, the most helpful thing you can do is ask your child what they think might help them feel better. It's also important to contextualise the issue for them too, as they might not understand the feelings for what they really are, or feel like they are going 'mad' because they don't have any background knowledge of depression.

"If your teenager is struggling, calmly explain to them they might be depressed, and that the issue is treatable, but that you understand it is a horrible place to be when you are suffering with it," says Dr Zwanenberg.

"Reassure them with statistics, such as the fact that one in 10 young people have a diagnosable mental illness at any one time, and depression is very common," she adds.

"Explain that if they see a GP, the doctor does not have to share everything with the parent, and that the discussions can be kept confidential."

Remind them you are willing to listen too, and that you will not get upset, be overbearing in your advice or dismiss their feelings.

REDUCE RISKS

If a child is displaying signs of self-harm or suicidal thoughts, Dr Zwaneberg stresses that you should urge them to telephone a helpline, such as Samaritans or ChildLine, and to ask them to share their thoughts with you in a manner they feel comfortable with, so that you can help keep them safe.

"They could text them to you, write their thoughts down, or talk to you about them when feeling calm," says Dr Zwanenberg. "Things that parents can do to reduce risk include locking away any potentially harmful substances and asking the young person what websites they are accessing online. You should then talk through whether these resources are really helpful to them or not."

"Ask them how they would like you to support them," she adds. "It might be they just want hugs, they want distraction such as watching a film with you or not to be left alone at night-time.

They might find it helpful to have useful mindfulness apps, such as Headspace (headspace.com) or Calm Harm (stem4.org)."

STAY CALM

Dr Zwanenberg says the most important thing you can do as a parent is to stay calm. "If you need to discuss what they tell you with another family member or friend for your own support, ensure the young person does not feel their confidence is being broken," she says. "Most importantly, seek professional help for your child. Depression is a very difficult illness that causes risks to the young person, but it is treatable, and the earlier treatment is accessed, the better."

If you're concerned about a teenager, charities like Young Minds (youngminds.org.uk) and Mind (mind.org.uk) can offer support and advice. Samaritans provides confidential support and are on 116 123, or email jo@samaritans.org

Bringing us sunshine with a Grand line-up

A NEW season of exciting shows is coming to Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre.

Shows vary from West End musicals and dramas, to dance productions and one-nighters.

Highlights include smash-hit musical The Bodyguard, a new production of Doctor Dolittle The Musical, Belinda Lang and Oliver Cotton in Duet For One, as well as Joe Pasquale, Russell Watson, Doreen Tipton and the National Theatre returning in 2019 with Macbeth. Tickets are now available, online and over the phone.

Among the most highly-anticipated shows is an evening of Eric and Ern on November 14.

An evening of Eric and Ern

Doreen will be there with her new live show

Acclaimed

The show is from the Olivier-nominated duo behind the hugely-celebrated and critically-acclaimed West End hit Eric & Little Ern.

The Bodyguard returns for two weeks only, from June 25-July 6, 2019. The show's cast is yet to be announced.

After an acclaimed run in London's West End, Tom Kempinski's multi-award-winning play Duet for One is coming to the Grand between October 2-6. Black Country favourite Doreen Tipton is bringing her latest show, Doreen's Big Top, to the theatre on November 2.

Doctor Doolittle the musical returns to the stage in Leslie Bricusse's acclaimed family musical for two weeks, from January 29-February 9. The National Theatre returns to Wolverhampton with Macbeth, from March 12-16.

Joe Pasquale burst onto our TV screens 30 years ago on ITV's New Faces. He will be in Wolverhampton on September 12 as part of his 30th anniversary tour. Russell Watson, who has performed to The Pope and two US Presidents, will be at the theatre on September 24.

Joe Pasquale is due in September as part of his 30th anniversary tour

Other shows announced for September include Brum Rocks Live on September 9, Faith – The George Michael Legacy on September 10, A Black Country Night Out on September 11, and Milkshake! Live on September 22.

The Whitney Houston Show takes place on October 28, St Matthew Passion on October 29, Mother Goose on October 30, The Stylistics on October 31, That'll Be The Day on November 15, Wicked Wizzard of Fizzog Comedy Show on November 17, and West Side Story from November 27 to December 1.

Heading into 2019 is Russian State Ballet of Siberia Triple from February 10 to 12, The Elvis Years on February 13, The Sensational 60s Experience on February 16 and The Producers from March 5 to 9.

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Stourbridge Chronicle Thursday, March 22, 2018

Meghan leads way with love of peonies

PUNDITS have been predicting that peonies may feature in Meghan Markle's wedding bouquet, so enamoured is she with these saucer-sized romantic blooms.

In the early days of dating Prince Harry, she posted a picture of a beautiful pink and white spray of peonies on Instagram, with the caption: "Swooning Over These. #London #peonies #spoiledrotten."

You too could have peonies flowering in your garden come early summer, and some will be at their best around the time of the royal wedding in May.

Their blousy blooms, in shades from deep red to white and everything in-between, add a touch of glamour to borders and, if you can bear it, you can cut them and bring them indoors.

HOW EASY ARE THEY TO GROW?

Pretty easy, in the right conditions. The pot-grown peonies you find in garden centres can be planted at any time of year, while bare-rooted types are ideally planted in October.

They prefer heavier soil in a sunny or slightly shaded spot, and add plenty of organic matter to the planting hole before you start. Don't let them get waterlogged, though. Add horticultural grit if the soil is extremely heavy.

Don't plant them too deeply – the soil should just cover the topmost tuberous roots. Mulch them lightly in February or March with potash-rich wood ash to increase flower production. If you want huge flowers (but less of them), debud the sideshoots in April or May with a sharp knife.

WILL THEY FLOWER THE FIRST YEAR?

You might be lucky, but peonies don't like being moved or replanted, so it may take a year or two for them to settle in before flowering. If you are transplanting existing plants, do it in early autumn or spring, keeping the rootball as intact as possible.

HOW LONG WILL THE FLOWERS LAST?

That largely depends on the weather. Vast bowls of petals emerge from thick stalks above the pretty foliage in late spring and early summer, which will need supporting with a stake or frame to stop them falling over in the wind.

The flowers of herbaceous peonies are shortlived, lasting little more than a week or two, and if it rains they won't last that long, as wet weather tends to make them flop, particularly the heavy, double flowered forms.

ANY RECOMMENDED VARIETIES?

If you want huge pink fragrant double flowers, try Paeonia lactiflora "Sarah Bernhardt", which is favoured by commercial cut flower producers. Familiar favourites include P. officinalis "Rubra Plena", a deep red, frilly double cottage variety, or if you want a larger tree peony, growing up to 2.5m, consider P. ludlowii, which bears zingy yellow saucer-shaped flowers.

For a longer flowering period go for "Bowl Of Beauty", a Japanese type which flowers for almost twice as long as the others and has a fantastic fragrance, growing to about 90cm, so it will need staking.

ANY RULES FOR CUTTING?

Don't cut stems in their first year of planting. Leave the plant to strengthen a bit and you'll have more blooms to cut the following year. Always leave at least a third of the stems on each plant, which will help it gather strength and feed the root through summer and early autumn.

INDOOR TIPS

Acclaimed floral designer Judith Blacklock, founder of The Judith Blacklock Flower School (judithblacklock.com) in London, explains: "You must cut peonies in bud but there must be some colour showing in the bud or it won't open."

She recommends pairing peonies in arrangements with astrantia and Alchemilla mollis.

Peonies are thirsty cut flowers, so fill up your vase every day with fresh water and they should last about a week. Snip off the base of the stems every couple of days to help them last a little longer.

"Remove the lower foliage but don't discard it as you can mass the leaves together and they will look gorgeous," Blacklock adds. "The cooler the atmosphere inside, the longer the flowers will last."

Do your research before changing energy supplier

The Beast from the East left an unwelcome surprise – higher energy bills

AFTER the Beast from the East came the big thaw and then the fear of gas shortages.

Now there is the shock of energy bill increases for householders with prices hitting record highs.

As residents turned up their heating to beat the cold the price of imported gas through pipelines from the continent rose to more than six times usual levels.

"That will obviously have a knock-on effect on customers, particularly those on variable rate tariffs," said green energy expert Ron Fox.

But he warned people not to rush in and swap suppliers, even though Eon and Bulb have already passed on the higher costs with bigger consumer bills.

He said they should research carefully if they were switching to one of the newer and smaller suppliers after a warning that some could go under because of rising costs and a lack of investment.

Already Future Energy with about 10,000 customers went bust last month. Though the energy regulator Ofgem will automatically transfer people to another provider if a firm fails, bills could still go up.

Ofgem said more than five million customers swapped supplier last year and more than half of those went to smaller companies.

Those who switched from a variable rate tariff to a fixed rate deal would have saved around £376 a year.

Mr Fox, of Noreus Ltd, said firstly, people should enter the tariff and energy usage from their most recent bill on a price comparison website which will suggest the cheapest supplier.

But he advises people thinking of moving to a new small provider to then look at three areas.

He said: "Beware of companies who ask you to pay up front for a better deal, they may not have a big enough cash reserve. Secondly, if this provider has a poor customer service record it may be struggling with rapid expansion. Finally, make sure the company gives both value for money and has a good trading record."

If they are happy then people can organise the switch online and it should be completed within weeks with no interruption to supply.

Meanwhile, for those looking for even more freedom from rising electricity and heating costs, Mr Fox recommends looking at renewable alternatives.

These include rooftop solar photovoltaic panels, which change energy from the sun into domestic electricity, and air source heat pumps, which work by absorbing heat from the atmosphere and converting this into power for the home.

An added bonus is that any surplus energy not used by the solar PV panels can be sold back to the National Grid, said Mr Fox.

Also the price of installing the panel has fallen dramatically over the last few years, so the initial outlay is recovered more quickly.

A good time to bring in fish – but avoid pitfalls

Report by Hannah Stephenson

HOPEFULLY the ice on your pond should now have melted, so it may soon be time to think about stocking it with suitable fish.

The best time to buy them is when the water temperature is rising and has reached about 10C (50F) – but which are the best buys?

Here's what you need to know...

CHOOSE A SUITABLE FISH

Among the most popular, exotic and expensive are koi carp, which are classified by scale types, patterns and colours. But be warned, if you want to keep koi well, your pond must be large and deep, with crystal clear water. Koi and other carp can grow to 75cm or more and some are worth thousands of pounds, so you may want to consider how secure the pond is before splashing out.

A less adventurous option is the common goldfish, which is easily bred and generally no longer than 15cm, ideal for most ponds, and will tolerate water as warm as 35C (95F), although not for long periods.

There are also fancy types of goldfish with enlarged heads and big, bubble-eyes, but many don't tolerate extremes in temperature, such as freezing weather or prolonged periods of heat.

Orfe, rudd and roach are also popular choices, although as many spend a lot of their time near the surface, you may need to protect your pond with netting to stop cats and herons from taking them.

Go to a reputable supplier who will allow you to examine and pick out your fish. The healthiest ones should have bright eyes and a sturdy body, with a stout dorsel fin. Fish with missing or damaged scales are best avoided, as the exposed tissue beneath the scales may be prone to fungal infection. But do remember not to mix exotic with native species, or you'll have a fight on your hands. Sticklebacks, for instance, will eat every goldfish egg as it's laid.

KEEP YOUR POND HEALTHY

Whichever fish you choose, the general rule for keeping them healthy is to have well-oxygenated water, varying depths, and sufficient food, shade and shelter. Get plants established and make sure the water is clear before you introduce the fish. A well-planted pond should ensure goldfish can acquire most of the food they need, although some additional feeding will be necessary.

If you have a wildlife pond, be aware that this is likely to attract other creatures, including predators such as herons and kingfishers, so the fish you choose should match the environment.

In this instance, it may be wise to avoid highly coloured ornamental varieties and go for native species which are cheaper to replace, such as dace, roach and rudd.

REMEMBER THAT FISH CAN BE FUSSY

Some fish don't like clear water – carp will disturb mud at the bottom of a pond to make it murky and camouflage them. And when buying fish, remember that they feed at different water levels. Koi feed at a minimum depth of 3ft (1m), so avoid shallow pools, while orfe are active surface-feeders, which can grow to 45cm or larger and are unsuitable for small ponds.

With spring now here, it's the perfect time to start thinking about stocking a pond with fish

Be wary of predators such as kingfishers

The common goldfish is a safe choice

DON'T OVERFILL THE POND

The number of fish you have in your pond depends on its size. Surface area determines how much oxygen is available to them, so work out how many fish you can accommodate by following this general rule – multiply the average length of the pond by its average width, to give you the surface area.

Apply a general rule of 1in of fish to each square foot – that's 25cm of fish per square metre. If in doubt, take advice from reputable pond and aquatic centres. It's better to have too few fish than too many.

KEEP THE WATER OXYGENATED

Deep water ponds also retain a more regular temperature and more dissolved oxygen during warm weather. If your fish dart about, it may be that they have become stressed because your pond is too shallow or there are not enough corners for them to hide.

You can keep fish in a pond without plants, but most gardeners prefer to add some aquatic greenery to make the area seem more natural.

Fish should be fed around twice a day in summer, but don't overfeed them. In winter the feeding can be cut down.

ACCLIMATISE THE FISH

To acclimatise fish to a pond, it's best to buy them small. They are generally transported from aquatic centres in plastic bags. To help them adapt to the lower temperature of the pond, sink the unopened bag into the pond for an hour or so, adding a small amount of pond water, then you can gently open it to release the fish.

Ten are charged over alleged drone drug smuggling plot

TEN people – including several from the Black Country – have been charged over an alleged plot to smuggle drugs and phones into prisons using drones.

HMP Oakwood and Featherstone near Wolverhampton and HMP Birmingham, known locally as Winson Green Prison, were among those allegedly targeted to fly in contraband.

The eight men and two women have been charged with three counts of conspiracy to supply drugs, psychoactive substances and banned items. It is claimed the group used drones to drop the consignments over prison walls.

All 10 were arrested during raids as part of an investigation by the West Midlands Regional Prison Investigation Team in Birmingham.

Those charged are: Paul Payne, aged 33, of Broad Street, Coseley; Callum McDonough, 25, from Shenley Field Road, Northfield, Birmingham; Shane Hadlington, 29, from Sycamore Lodge, Oldbury; Hannah Williams, 34, from Horton Street, Tipton; Stella Deakin, 40, in Boundary Hill, Dudley; Richard Harrabin, 27, from Perton Grove, Weoley Castle. Birmingham; Jake Blewitt, 20, from Highfield Road, Tipton; Dwayne Tinker, 20, of Lindridge Drive, Minworth, Sutton Coldfield; Ryan Greaves, 21, from Kimberley Walk, Minworth; and Robert Morris, 43, from Sedgley Road West, Tipton

They are alleged to have been involved in an operation which saw up to 90 consignments of drugs, plus phones and SIM cards dropped over prison walls between April 2016 and June last year.

Prisons targeted were HMP Birmingham in Winson Green; HMP Oakwood and Featherstone; Worcestershire's HMP Hewell; HMP Risley in Warrington; HMP Wymott in Lancashire and HMP Liverpool.

See old forge press running as mill opens

AN historic watermill near Stourbridge is opening for the first time this year.

Churchill Forge at the village of Churchill, near Hagley, will open on Easter Monday.

New for this year is the forge press, which will be demonstrated throughout the afternoon between 2pm and 5pm.

The press was made in 1926 by well-known Black Country engineers Higgins and Son of Lye. Weighing more than four tons, it is described as very impressive when running.

There has been a forge on the site since before 1800. The forge made hand tools such as spades and forks and ladles and was in use until 1969. Today it is a small industrial museum.

There are also two working waterwheels, both 17 foot in diameter, from the 1800s. Visit churchillforge.org.uk for more information.

It's a yes from me – Andy gets approval

Which is which? – Simon Cowell and Dudley's Andy Monk have met

A GRANDFATHER who has been regularly mistaken for Simon Cowell for the past 16 years admits he is asked for selfies and autographs on a daily basis.

Andy Monk, aged 59, has been confused with the famous music mogul and TV talent judge since 2002, when Cowell first gained fame for his appearances on Pop Idol.

Since then, Andy is taken for the star on a daily basis with 'fans' stopping him for selfies and autographs wherever he goes.

Even his grandson, William, aged four, shouts 'grandad' at the television when Cowell is seen on Britain's Got Talent. Andy admits he now goes along with it so people are not disappointed.

Andy, from Dudley, said: "For over 10 years now I've been mistaken for Simon, but I never saw it at first. It started because my friends would always comment that I looked like Simon, but now I get it from strangers every day. Every time I go shopping I get stopped by people and even if it's not for a photo or an autograph, I get whispers of 'oh look, it's Simon Cowell'.

"One of the times I met Simon he gave me the '100 per cent approval', so that really boosted my confidence."

The part-time DJ has attended multiple events as a Simon Cowell look-alike and even met his wife Rose Cook Monk, 48, when she was acting as a Debbie Harry tribute.

Land swap for museum car park plan

A NEW car park will be built at the Black Country Living Museum as part of its bid to attract thousands more visitors.

Extra spaces will be created at the attraction on Tipton Road following a land swap deal with Dudley Council.

Museum bosses have been keen to free up more room in order to provide extra space for vehicles at the popular attraction, which is set for major growth over the next decade as it adds a 1960s zone to its Victorian and 1930s attractions.

Council bosses have agreed in principle to hand over the land to allow the car park to go ahead and it was due to be approved yesterday (Wednesday).

In return, the museum will give the council a 1.5 acre patch of land it owns near to the recently approved Very Light Rail development and close to where the extension to the Metro line from Wednesbury to Brierley Hill will run.

The Black Country Living Museum is hoping to attract an extra 200,000 visitors a year once its expansion is complete.

The £10 million project will see the museum grow in size by about a third and involve the creation of a new postwar town. Several iconic buildings, including the old West Bromwich Gas Showroom and Dudley's Woodside Library, are being rebuilt there.

TV expert is to give talk about wildlife

A TV wildlife expert is to give a talk in South Staffordshire later this month.

Kate MacRae, who has appeared on Countryfile, Springwatch and Autumnwatch, will give a talk entitled Create Springwatch in your Garden on March 29 at 7.30pm at Wombourne Community Centre, hosted by Staffordshire Wildlife Trust. Admission is £2.

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Chess

For the first time in 30 years, Chess will see a big revival in London with a star studded cast including Michael Ball and Alexandra Burke, for a limited time only. This symbolic production tells a story of love and political intrigue, set against the background of the Cold War in the late 1970s/early 1980s.

This epic musical love story features music by Björn Ulvaeus and Benny Andersson (former ABBA stars and songwriters) and lyrics by Tim Rice (famed for Jesus Christ Superstar, The Lion King and Evita).

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£32m revamp under way at business park

A CEREMONY has marked the start of work on a multi-million pound scheme to build new industrial units in Tipton.

Halesowen-based A&H Construction has been appointed by developers CEG to deliver the revamp of Vaughan Park, a £32 million scheme it is hoped will create up to 1,000 jobs.

CEG has secured planning permission from Sandwell Council to build five industrial units totalling 80,000 sq ft. The scheme involves flattening most of the existing buildings on land neighbouring the Thomas Dudley foundry and CAB Autos factory.

Further work on the 28-acre site could see the business park expanded to 500,000 sq ft of industrial and warehouse space.

At a ceremony to break ground and mark the start of construction work, Sandwell's regeneration cabinet member, Councillor Paul Moore, said it was encouraging to see another speculative commercial development taking place in the borough.

He said: "There is no doubt that Sandwell offers businesses wishing to expand and grow a chance to move to an area at the forefront of industry, with established supply chains, great access to the motorway network as well as a highly skilled workforce."

A&H Construction started work on the site last week and units will be ready later this year.

Lots of laughs as play is going wrong again

ONE of the most popular stage comedies of recent years is making a triumphant return to Birmingham Hippodrome for The Play That Goes Wrong... again.

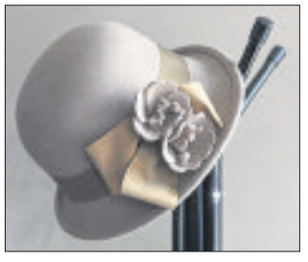
Comedy chaos ensues in this frantic farce about accident-prone amateur thespians. It's staged from Tuesday to Saturday.

Claire Dolman pairs a hat and dress at the museum

Shirts of different types and sizes

Claire puts the finishing touch to a hat

A dress and the patterns it was made to



A stylish period hat

There is always something that needs ironing

Claire's got history all sewn up

FROM a chainmaker in the forge to a barmaid at the Bottle and Glass – it's seamstress Claire Dolman's job to help bring the Black Country Living Museum's costumed characters to life.

Behind the scenes, Claire and her team of six volunteers are hard at work creating authentic-looking outfits for around 200 staff.

"The clothes are an important part of the story that we are trying to tell at the museum so we want them to be the best they can be and look correct for the period we are focusing on," says Claire, who has worked at the attraction for almost four years.

Each costume is thoroughly researched by the team who will look at what someone of that age and class would have been wearing at the time, paying attention to all the details.

"It's easy to get influenced by what is fashionable now but we need to look at the colours and prints that would have been around then," says 41-year-old Claire, from Wolverhampton, who uses a combination of original patterns, photographs and tailors' books from the period.

The museum's collection of original clothing is also used to guide the team and then can also use them to make a pattern to create a replica garment. Materials such as wool and cotton come from a range of suppliers but sometimes inspiration will strike when Claire is out and about.

"I found a duvet cover in Primark with a flower print that was spot-on for 1880s-style dress. As soon as I saw it, I knew I had seen something like it before from that period. I was pleased with how the dress turned out and it only took a day-and-a-half," says Claire, who has always enjoyed sewing as a hobby.

Hats had always proved a challenge but Claire has taken a millinery course to help hone her skills. Claire also runs a knitting club at the museum.

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The Ticket

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PLAY THAT WENT WRONG IS RIGHT STUFF

INSIDE

COMMERCIAL FEATURE

THE PIRATES ARE TAKING OVER THE SAMSON THIS EASTER SUNDAY!

Sheila and the team are holding a family fun day. Easter Sunday will feature the Pirates Party where everyone are encouraged to dress up as pirates. All adults will receive a free shot for their efforts. All the pirates will be forcing 'EVO' to walk the plank!! There will also be a Disco and Karaoke along with party games for the children where prizes can be won, face painting and lots of sweets!

Bar snacks will be available to purchase all day and everyday where you can take advantage of the burger and pint offer £4.50.

The Samson & Lion also hold regular open mic nights which is the first Wednesday of every month with the next one taking place 4th April. So if you have a hidden talent why not come down and join in with the fun? Also look out for our regular psychic nights with an evening with Dave Williams.

Are you holding an event? Are you planning a surprise party? Well look no further. Why not take us up on our amazing deal where we will hire you our function room and supply you with a fantastic DJ all for £100. Our team at the 'Sammy' will meet all your requirements and are at hand to make sure your event/party runs smoothly and will help get the party in full swing. So get in touch now.

So whether you're looking for somewhere to meet with family and friends, have a bite to eat, enjoy some live entertainment or something a little different then the Samson and Lion has something to offer everyone.

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Playing for laughs as play went right

A brilliantly funny comedy that will have fans aching with laughter will head to the Birmingham Hippodrome from Tuesday to March 31. The Play That Goes Wrong features the Cornley Polytechnic Drama Society who are putting on a 1920s murder mystery.

As the title suggests, everything that can go wrong… does and as the accident prone thesps battle on against all the odds to reach their final curtain call, hilarious results ensue.

Hailed 'a gut-busting hit' by the New York Times, Mischief Theatre's sell-out West End comedy, which is now playing on Broadway, has won a host of celebrity endorsements from the likes of Joanna Lumley who said: "We laughed until the tears ran down our faces, it has to be seen" to Ant & Dec, who said: "The funniest show we've seen! If you can get a ticket, go!"

The show is returning to Birmingham after a sell-out run last year.

Director Mark Bell created the West End productions of the Olivier Award-winning The Play That Goes Wrong, as well as The Comedy About a Bank Robbery. He originally wanted to be an actor but spent a lot of his career training and teaching the art of clowning and is a virtuoso at shaping comedy.

Playing for laughs – The Play That Went Wrong

CHOICE

He was immediately drawn to The Play That Goes Wrong. "It needs to make me laugh, or I can see how it would be funny. Sometimes on the page they don't look like that much, but I was at the very first reading of The Play That Goes Wrong and that was obvious – I could see where they were going to take the characters, playing off their idea of the audience – that was an easy choice.

"I honestly don't know, I don't have a method – you just read it a couple of times and see if you can picture how you would do it. I knew straight away the kind of actors I would want and how I would approach it."

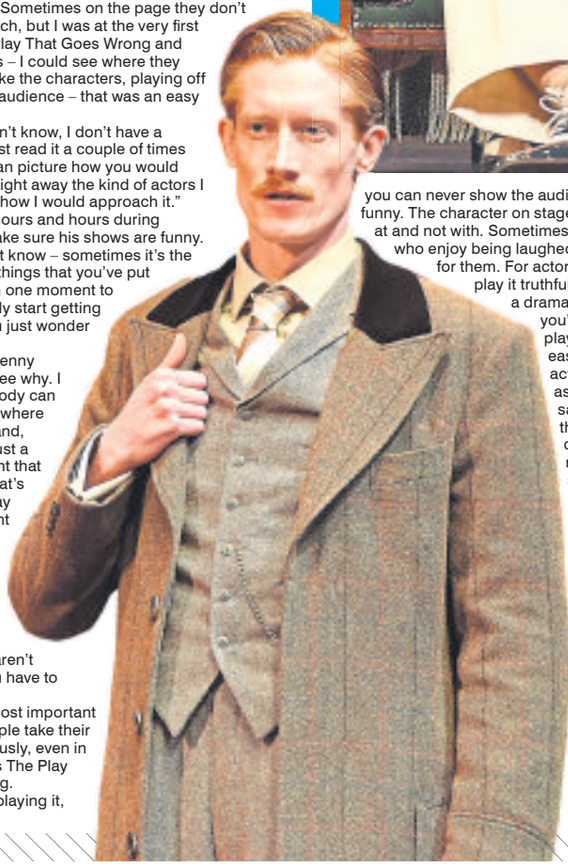
Mark puts in hours and hours during rehearsals to make sure his shows are funny.

"You just don't know – sometimes it's the little innocuous things that you've put in to bridge from one moment to the next suddenly start getting a laugh, and you just wonder why.

"Usually the penny drops and you see why. I don't think anybody can really anticipate where the laughs will land, sometimes it's just a simple movement that an actor does that's funny. I would say about 80 per cent of stuff that we put in rehearsal lands and we don't have to change, and there's always a couple of things that you're sad aren't working and you have to change."

He says the most important thing is that people take their characters seriously, even in shows as silly as The Play That Goes Wrong.

"As the actor playing it, you can never show the audience that you find it funny. The character on stage has to be laughed at and not with. Sometimes you get characters who enjoy being laughed at and that's fun for them. For actors I say you have to play it truthfully, like you're playing a dramatic part. Treat it like you're doing a Chekhov play. Comedy isn't easier than dramatic acting, it's ten times as hard. You need the same dramatic truth that you have for the character but in a ridiculously absurd setting, whilst getting your blocking and your timing exactly right, otherwise you don't get the laugh that you need for the show to move on. You've got to be both truthful and a master technician at the same time – and that's hard."



The successful UK production has been described as having sets as shaky as a Conservative immigration manifesto pledge and a script as tortuous as a Diane Abbott interview. The show originally started in a pub theatre before transferring to the Trafalgar Studios, enjoying a UK tour and an extended run at the Duchess Theatre in the West End.

> *I don't think anybody can really anticipate where the laughs will land*

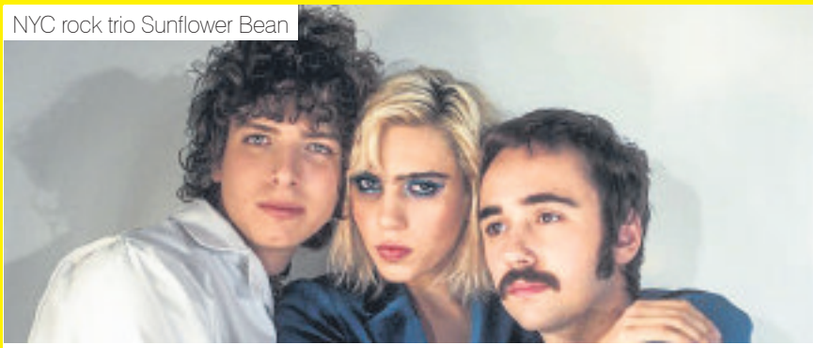
The writers and creators of the play, Henry Shields, Henry Lewis and Jonathan Sayer, are stunned that they were able to recreate their madcap roles on Broadway.

Henry Shields says: "It's been very positive. We've been overwhelmed as to how supportive American audiences have been."

Henry Lewis adds: "We haven't really changed much, most of the show is performed as it is in London. Over the course of the whole journey of the show lots has changed as it has been performed, but it hasn't changed much for Broadway audiences, just a few terms that aren't used in the USA and making sure that's clear."

● **For more entertainment news and reviews see The Ticket in your Express & Star every Friday.**

NYC rock trio Sunflower Bean



Traumatic times inspiring for young human Beans

New York trio Sunflower Bean tomorow (Friday) release their second album, Twentytwo in Blue, ahead of a gig at the Hare and Hounds, Kings Heath, on Tuesday.

The album gets its title from the fact that all members of the band – Julia Cumming, Jacob Faber and Nick Kivlen – are 22-years-old.

The album comes just over two years since the release of their critically acclaimed debut album Human Ceremony. Since then the band's classic rock inspired sound has matured and gigs supporting Wolf Alice last year have won them new fans in the UK.

Twentytwo in Blue shows Sunflower Bean staying true to their guitar band core, while exploring new sonic textures with more direct and progressive themes. It showcases how far the band has come since playing together in their high school days.

To celebrate the album Sunflower Bean share a new single, Crisis Fest, the follow up to the catchy, almost Fleetwood Mac-like, I Was A Fool.

"2017—we know/ Reality's one big sick show/ Every day's a crisis fest," vocalist and bassist Julia sings. "Last year was extremely alarming, traumatic, and politically volatile," says the band. "While writing this album, we often reflected back on the people we met while on tour.

"We felt a strong kinship with the audiences that came to see us all over the country, and we wanted to write a song for them – something to capture the anxieties of an uncertain future."

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Disney favourites to enchant the ice

From wheels to waves, icy wonderlands to infinity and beyond, dozens of favourite Disney moments will come to life at Disney On Ice presents Worlds of Enchantment.

Eight shows are planned at Birmingham's Genting Arena between Wednesday (March 28) and Sunday (April 1) as the magic of Disney is brought to life by some of the world's best ice skaters.

The latest show is called Worlds of Enchantment and fans can enter the dazzling world of Disney for non-stop fun with four of their favourite Disney stories.

There will be the high-speed stunts of Lightning McQueen, Mater and the crew of Disney/Pixar's Cars, who will race across the ice like never before.

Fans can dive into adventure with Ariel in The Little Mermaid's enchanted undersea kingdom.

The toys are back in town as Buzz Lightyear, Woody, Jessie and the Toy Story gang escape from the rambunctious tots of Sunnyside Daycare in their most daring adventure ever.

And fans can also enter the wintry world of Arendelle with sisters Anna and Elsa and pals Olaf and Kristoff from Disney's Frozen, as they learn that true love comes from within.

For tickets visit www.disneyonice.com or call the hotline on 0844 338 0338.

Performance Director for Disney on Ice, former Olympian Jackie Soames, is particulary happy that the world tour is coming to Birmingham as she hails from nearby Nuneaton. She embarked on her remarkable career, both solo and in pairs with John Jenkins, after learning to skate at Solihull Ice Rink at the age of eight.

With Easter School Holidays just around the corner, keep an eye out for activites and ideas for days out to keep your children busy and entertained!
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Q.U.B.E. 2 is top of the blocks puzzler

You don't have to be familiar with the original to enjoy Q.U.B.E 2, Toxic Games' immersive first person puzzle trek through a futuristic maze of monolith blocks. As Commander Emma Sutcliffe you move blocks and explore as a stranded protagonist with only a colleague on a communicator for help. Exploring and manipulating the environment poses challenges. There is a growing sense of unease. This addictive game is available for Xbox One, Playstation 4 and PC.

Magic night ahead for indie rock fans

GIG highlights include tonight's (Thursday's) sold out show by The Magic Gang at Birmingham's O2 Institute 2 in Digbeth. Check out their slacker pop anthems on their just released debut album. Also tonight, singer, songwriter and frontman of rock band Idlewild, Roddy Woomble, has a gig at the Hare and Hounds in Kings Heath. He won acclaim for latest solo album The Deluder and will also be playing some Idlewild songs. Support from Tom Joshua. The Wombats will be playing tracks from fourth album Beautiful People Will Ruin Your Life at the 02 Institute tomorrow night, whilst rising star singer-songwriter Tom Walker plays the venue's other room. Claire Hastings, BBC Radio Scotland Young Traditional Musician of the Year, is with Aidan Moodie at Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton, Saturday.

SATURDAY'S TV MARCH 24

CHOICE

Picasso

Picasso's Last Stand (BBC2, 9pm)
Documentary telling the story of the last decade of the great artist's life, through the memories of family, close friends and the people he allowed into his world in the 1960s. As his health declined in these final years, Picasso faced damaging criticism of his work for the first time, and intimate details about his bohemian lifestyle were revealed. Yet, in the midst of disaster, he rediscovered his revolutionary spirit with a creative surge that produced some of his most sexually frank and comic work.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Classic Mary Berry. (R) **12.00** Football Focus. **12.30** BBC News; Weather. **12.45 Film:** The Pirates! In an Adventure with Scientists! (2012) Animated comedy, with the voice of Hugh Grant. **2.05** Gymnastics: World Cup Highlights. **3.50** The Boat Race. Live coverage of the men's and women's University Boat Races.

6.15 Doodlebugs. Sketch show in which inanimate objects share their thoughts on the world. With the voices of Kayvan Novak, Cardinal Burns, Morgana Robinson and Spencer Jones.

6.30 BBC News.

6.40 Regional Programme.

6.45 Pointless Celebrities. A special Grange Hill version of the quiz, featuring Todd Carty, Alison Bettles, Paula Ann Bland, Lee MacDonald, Erkan Mustafa, Michelle Gayle, Francesca Martinez and Stuart Organ.

7.40 Who Dares Wins. Game show in which two pairs of complete strangers team up, each battling to outdo the other by listing as much as they know about a given subject.

8.20 Casualty. The day of Robyn and Glen's wedding arrives, but the groom has a seizure while getting ready at the hotel. Rash treats a woman suffering from anxiety after the death of her fiance.

9.10 Troy: Fall of a City. The Trojan royal family receive a message from the gods and embark on a daring raid with their newfound allies. Achilles is provoked into returning to battle Hector, while Helen's situation remains precarious. The sixth episode of David Farr's Ancient Greek historical drama based on the Trojan War and the love affair between Paris and Helen, starring Tom Weston-Jones, Louis Hunter, Jonas Armstrong, Bella Dayne, David Threlfall, Johnny Harris, David Gyasi, Lemogang Tsipa, Chloe Pirrie and Joseph Mawle.

10.10 BBC News; Weather.; National Lottery Update.

10.30 Film: Guardians of the Galaxy. (2014) A band of escapees from a prison space station battles an alien warlord for possession of a powerful artefact. Sci-fi adventure, starring Chris Pratt.

12.25 Weather for the Week Ahead.
12.30 BBC News.

BBC2

6.10 The Wonder of Animals. (R) **6.40** Naomi's Nightmares of Nature. (R) **7.10** The Pets Factor. **7.30** The Dengineers. **8.00** Absolute Genius: Monster Builds. **8.30** Beyond Bionic. **9.00** Robot Wars. (R) **10.00** Gordon Buchanan: Elephant Family & Me. (R) **11.00** Famously Unfit for Sport Relief. (R) **12.00** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **12.45** Escape to the Country. (R) **1.30** Planet Earth. (R) **2.30** Me and My Dog: The Ultimate Contest. (R) **3.30** The Repair Shop. (R) **4.00** The Secret Helpers. (R) **5.00** Big Cats About the House. (R)

6.00 Hugh's Wild West. Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall celebrates volunteers who help wildlife in the West Country, meeting a woman who has transformed her home into a hedgehog hospital. Last in the series.

7.00 Amazing Hotels: Life Beyond the Lobby. Giles Coren and Monica Galetti work in Ireland's Ashford Castle, dating back to 1228. Despite its rollercoaster ride through the ages Ashford has sustained strong community ties. (R)

8.00 David Attenborough's Natural Curiosities. The evolutionary documentary concludes, as David Attenborough profiles the Siamese fighting fish and the kangaroo, which has a kick so strong it can kill. Last in the series.

8.30 Dad's Army. The platoon takes part in an efficiency test in a bid to prove its worth, but mistakenly attacks a tea lady with onions from Jones's van. Guest starring Fulton Mackay. (R)

9.00 Picasso's Last Stand. Documentary telling the story of the last decade of the great artist's life, through the memories of family, close friends and the people he allowed into his world in the 1960s.

10.00 Film: A Late Quartet. (2012) A member of a string quartet announces his retirement, bringing up personal conflicts among the other musicians. Drama, with Christopher Walken and Philip Seymour Hoffman.

11.40 Film: Safe Haven. (2013) A woman trying to make a fresh start in a coastal town realises she must confront the dark past she is running from. Romantic drama, with Julianne Hough.

2.30 (BST) Civilisations. (R) **3.30** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Sooty. **6.10** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.20** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.50** Super 4. (R) **7.00** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.05** Marvel's Avengers: Ultron Revolution. (R) **7.30** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.35** Scrambled!: The Tom and Jerry Show. (R) **7.50** Scrambled!: The Powerpuff Girls. (R) **8.10** Scrambled!: The Bagel and Becky Show. (R) **8.30** Scrambled!: Be Cool, Scooby-Doo! (R) **9.05** Scrambled!: Wishfart. (R) **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** James Martin's Saturday Morning. **11.20** Who's Doing the Dishes? (R) **12.20** ITV News; Weather. **12.30** Dancing on Ice – The Final. (R) **2.30** Britain's Brightest Family. (R) **3.00** Celebrity Catchphrase. (R) **4.00** Tipping Point. (R) **5.00** The Chase. (R)

6.00 ITV News; Weather.

6.20 Regional Programme; Weather.

6.30 New You've Been Framed! Harry Hill narrates a selection of mishaps filmed by viewers, featuring a woman being attacked by a remote-controlled plane and a man hit by a giant trampoline during a hurricane.

7.00 Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway. Comedian Alan Carr joins the fun as this week's guest announcer, while the Geordie duo go up against cast members from Coronation Street in the return of Make 'Em Laugh. Plus, Stephen Mulhern hits the streets of Warrington in the latest edition of In for a Penny, a lucky audience member gets the chance to Win the Ads, and Sofa Watch sees more Places on the Plane up for grabs.

8.30 The Voice UK. Emma Willis presents the second of the knockout shows as the remaining acts sing for a place in next week's semi-final. Coaches Will.i.am, Tom Jones, Olly Murs and reigning champion Jennifer Hudson can pick only one act from their teams to progress in the competition, so there are some tough decisions to make. Helping them are R'n'B star Craig David, members of the Black Eyed Peas, Australian pop queen Kylie Minogue, 2006 winner of The X Factor Leona Lewis and The Voice UK's reigning champion, Mo Jamil.

10.30 ITV News; Weather.

10.45 Film: Fast & Furious 5. (2011)

2.00 (BST) Jackpot247. **3.00** Babushka. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.15 The King of Queens. (R) **6.40** The King of Queens. (R) **7.05** The King of Queens. (R) **7.30** Mobil 1: The Grid. **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.25** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.55** Frasier. (R) **9.25** Frasier. (R) **10.00** Frasier. (R) **10.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **12.00** The Simpsons. (R) **12.30** The Simpsons. (R) **1.00** Formula 1 Australian Grand Prix Qualifying Highlights. **2.50** Car SOS. **3.50** Coast vs Country. (R) **4.50** A Place in the Sun: Summer Sun. (R) **5.35** The Secret Life of the Zoo. (R)

6.30 Channel 4 News.

7.00 Coastal Railways with Julie Walters. The actress travels around the UK coast by train, beginning by boarding the famous Jacobite steam train for a trip along Scotland's West Highland Railway, famously featured in the Harry Potter movies. Along the way, Julie learns about herring gutting and blowing up railway lines, and meets a traditional Scottish storyteller on the Isle of Skye. (R)

8.00 Britain at Low Tide. Tori Herridge uncovers the story behind a dramatic night in 1976 when fishing trawler the Admiral Von Tromp went wildly off course in the North Sea, after setting off in Scarborough and running aground in Whitby, North Yorkshire, with the wreckage still visible on the shores of Saltwick Bay to this day. The massive remains of a First World War fort lead Tori to tales of love in the East Yorkshire hamlet of Kilnsea, and she learns the strange fate of two ships that were built in Hull but ended up on top of a mountain in Peru.

9.00 Film: Everest. (2015) Premiere. Two expeditions set out to climb to the summit of the world's highest mountain. Both parties of mountaineers get caught in one of the fiercest snowstorms ever recorded, and face a desperate struggle to survive against the elements. Fact-based adventure, starring Jason Clarke, Josh Brolin, Jake Gyllenhaal and Keira Knightley.

11.20 Film: Predator 2. (1990) Sci-fi thriller sequel, starring Danny Glover and Bill Paxton.

2.20 (BST) Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. (R) **3.10** Hollyoaks. (R) **5.15** Coast vs Country. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.00** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.35** The Gadget Show. (R) **11.30** Police Interceptors. (R) **12.30** Police Interceptors. (R) **1.30** Police Interceptors. (R) **2.30** Live Aviva Premiership Rugby Union. Saracens v Harlequins (Kick-off 3.00pm). **5.15** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R)

6.10 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. Kevin Stokes and Brian O'Shaughnessy chase a £16,000 debt run up by a coach company and Stewart McCracken and Elmor Victor face a heartbreaking house repossession. (R)

7.00 Cruising with Jane McDonald. Jane cruises around Cuba aboard the Celestyal Crystal, starting and ending in Havana, sampling the relatively new tourist industry of the Caribbean island. (R)

7.55 5 News Weekend.

8.00 Inside Windsor Castle. Documentary marking the centenary of the Windsor dynasty by examining the history of the royal residence over the past 80 years, looking at the tragedies and triumphs that have had an impact on the Queen and her family. The first edition reflects on the events of the past 25 years, including the fire in November 1992 that started in the private chapel and came at the end of a terrible year for the royals, with marital troubles hitting the Queen's three elder children. (R)

9.00 King Tut's Treasure Secrets. New series. Documentary exploring the thousands of items found with the great Egyptian pharaoh when his tomb was first uncovered.

9.55 King Tut's Tomb: The Hidden Chamber. Documentary examining recent discoveries made in the famous burial chamber, which archaeologists now believe may also be the resting place of Queen Nefertiti. (R)

10.50 Secrets of the Valley of the Kings. An exploration of the Valley of the Kings, the royal necropolis of the pharaohs and the world's most famous royal burial ground. (R)

11.40 Football on 5: Goal Rush. Colin Murray introduces all the goals from the weekend's games in Leagues One and Two.

12.15 SuperCasino. **3.10 Film:** (BST) Due Date. (2010) **4.45** House Doctor. (R) **5.10** Great Artists. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Lost Kingdoms of Central America **8.00** The Silk Road **9.00** Below the Surface **10.30** Top of the Pops: 1985 **11.30** Blues at the BBC **12.30** Ballrooms and Ballerinas: Dance at the BBC **2.30** (BST) Lost Kingdoms of Central America **3.30** The Silk Road **4.30** Secret Knowledge: Hidden Jewels of the Cheapside Hoard **5.00** Close

ITV2
11.20 Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway **12.50** You've Been Framed! Funniest 100 **1.55 Film:** Spy Kids 3-D: Game Over (2003) **2.55** FYI Daily **3.00 Film:** Spy Kids 3-D: Game Over (2003) **3.40 Film:** Happy Feet (2006) **4.40** FYI Daily **4.45 Film:** Happy Feet (2006) **5.45 Film:** The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor (2008) **6.45** FYI Daily **6.50 Film:** The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor (2008) **7.50 Film:** The Amazing Spider-Man (2012) **8.55** FYI Daily **9.00 Film:** The Amazing Spider-Man (2012) **10.30** Celebrity Juice **11.35** Family Guy **12.35** American Dad! **2.05** (BST) American Dad! **2.30** Action Team

ITV3
12.30 Agatha Christie's Marple **2.40 Film:** Evil Under the Sun (1982) **5.00** Midsomer Murders **11.00** Lewis **2.55** (BST) ITV3 Nightscreen

ITV4
11.25 Monster Carp **1.30** ITV Racing: Live from Doncaster. **4.00 Film:** Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure (1989) **5.05** FYI Daily **5.10 Film:** Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure (1989) **5.45** Storage Wars **6.45** Live Snooker: Players Championship. **11.00 Film:** Windtalkers (2002) **12.10** FYI Daily **12.15 Film:** Windtalkers (2002) **2.45** (BST) ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

E4
12.30 Film: Dragonball Evolution (2009) **2.05** Rude(ish) Tube Shorts **2.30** The Goldbergs **3.00** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **3.30** Young Sheldon **4.00** The Great Celebrity Bake Off for Stand Up to Cancer **5.15** Extreme Cake Makers **6.00** The Big Bang Theory **9.00 Film:** 2 Guns (2013) **11.05** Gogglebox **12.10** Five Star Hotel **2.15** (BST) Five Star Hotel **3.20** The Inbetweeners **3.45** How I Met Your Mother

Film4
11.00 Anastasia (1997) **1.00** Flight of the Navigator (1986) **2.50** The Indian in the Cupboard (1995) **4.40** Carry On Cabby (1963) **6.35** Mrs Doubtfire (1993) **9.00** American Ultra (2015) **10.50** Zombieland (2009) **12.30** Nymphomaniac: Volume II (2013) **4.00** (BST) Close

SUNDAY'S TV MARCH 25

CHOICE

Ewan and Colin McGregor

RAF at 100 with Ewan and Colin McGregor (BBC1, 8.30pm)
The actor and his former pilot brother present a celebration of the Royal Air Force's centenary, taking to the skies in iconic planes from the First World War to the present day. They also meet service personnel from throughout the RAF's history, including a veteran of the Battle of Britain, former female members of the Air Transport Auxiliary, crew members who had the responsibility of dropping the atom bomb, modern-day Typhoon fighter crews, and the last pilot to be involved in a dogfight.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** The Big Questions. **11.00** Regional Programme. **12.15** BBC News; Weather. **12.30** MasterChef. (R) **1.30** MasterChef. (R) **2.30** MasterChef. (R) **3.00** Money for Nothing. (R) **4.00** Regional Programme. **4.30** Songs of Praise. **5.05** Sport Relief 2018: The Best Bits.
6.05 BBC News.
6.20 Regional Programme.
6.30 Countryfile. Matt Baker reports on a conservation project in Shropshire to prevent the county's rivers being polluted by iron ore brought to the surface by the area's long history of mining. Ellie Harrison visits a pop-up restaurant using only locally sourced ingredients and goes searching for pine martens, Steve Brown meets a glass sculptor, and Tom Heap reports on declining numbers of British hedgehogs.
7.30 Hold the Sunset. Phil fears he will lose Edith to Bob, and that a face from his past may make an unwelcome reappearance. Last in the series.
8.00 MasterChef. John Torode and Gregg Wallace present the first of two programmes in which eight of the 16 cooks to make it through the heats must prepare one of their favourite dishes.
8.30 RAF at 100 with Ewan and Colin McGregor. The actor and his former pilot brother present a celebration of the Royal Air Force's centenary, taking to the skies in iconic planes from the First World War to the present day. They also meet service personnel from throughout the RAF's history, including a veteran of the Battle of Britain, former female members of the Air Transport Auxiliary, crew members who had the responsibility of dropping the atom bomb, modern-day Typhoon fighter crews, and the last pilot to be involved in a dogfight.
10.00 BBC News.
10.20 Regional Programme.
10.30 Film: War of the Worlds. (2005) A divorced father tries to protect his two children as alien war machines start to wipe out the human race. Steven Spielberg's sci-fi thriller, with Tom Cruise.
12.15 The Women's Football Show. **12.50** Weather for the Week Ahead. **12.55** BBC News.

BBC2

6.20 Coast. (R) **7.20** The Instant Gardener. (R) **8.05** Gardeners' World. (R) **8.35** Countryfile. (R) **9.35** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.05** Spring Kitchen with Tom Kerridge. (R) **11.50** Lorraine Pascale: How to Be a Better Cook. (R) **12.20** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **1.20 Film:** Bringing Up Baby. (1938) Screwball comedy, starring Katharine Hepburn and Cary Grant. **3.00** Pilgrimage: The Road to Santiago. (R) **4.00** The Ladykillers: Pest Detectives. (R) **5.00 Film:** Real Steel. (2011) Sci-fi drama, starring Hugh Jackman.
7.00 Down the Mighty River with Steve Backshall. The naturalist travels down the Baliem River in New Guinea from its source to the sea, hoping to encounter the ancient tribes and dangerous wildlife that live long its banks and in the surrounding jungle. He begins his journey inland at Lake Habbema, and braves some of the world's fiercest white water rapids. Along the way, he stays in a village belonging to the Dani tribe and ventures into some previously unexplored caves. (R)
8.00 Top Gear. Matt LeBlanc test drives the Ferrari 812 Superfast, while Rory Reid travels to the US in search of a muscle car that is illegal in Europe. With guest Vicky McClure (Line of Duty).
9.00 Reggie Yates: Searching for Grenfell's Lost Lives. The presenter meets families and friends of people who died in the Grenfell fire, to gain an understanding of the disaster's victims as people and as members of a community.
10.00 Mock the Week. James Acaster, Angela Barnes, Kerry Godliman, Nish Kumar and Glenn Moore join host Dara O Briain and regular Hugh Dennis for the topical comedy show. (R)
10.30 Top Gear: Extra Gear. Chris Harris takes the new Porsche GT3 for a spin on the track, while motoring journalist Alex Kersten and racing engineer Mark Wynne chat about the future of the V12 engine.
10.55 Film: Life of Crime. (2013) Two criminals kidnap the wife of a corrupt real-estate tycoon, only to discover he is not willing to pay their ransom demand. Comedy, with Jennifer Aniston.
12.30 Sign Zone: Question Time. (R) **1.30** Holby City. (R) **2.30** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Sooty. **6.10** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.20** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.50** Super 4. (R) **7.00** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.05** Marvel's Avengers: Ultron Revolution. (R) **7.30** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.35** Scrambled!: The Tom and Jerry Show. (R) **7.50** Scrambled!: Teen Titans Go! (R) **8.10** Scrambled!: Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **8.30** Scrambled!: Spy School. **9.05** Scrambled!: Wishfart. (R) **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** Britain's Best Walks with Julia Bradbury. (R) **10.00** Peston on Sunday. **11.00** The Voice UK. (R) **12.50** ITV News; Weather. **1.00** Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway. (R) **2.30** You've Been Framed! (R) **3.00** Tenable. (R) **4.00** Tipping Point. (R) **5.00** The Chase: Celebrity Special. (R)
6.00 Paul O'Grady: For the Love of Dogs. (R)
6.30 ITV News; Weather.
6.45 Regional Programme; Weather.
7.00 Celebrity Catchphrase. Stephen Mulhern hosts a celebrity edition of the game show, asking contestants Jonathan Ross, Tess Daly and Linda Robson to "see it and say it" as they try to guess the familiar phrases hidden in animated clues. After the first elimination, the two remaining players battle to reach the Super Catchphrase round, where one of them could win £50,000 for the charity of their choice.
8.00 The Durrells. Louisa and Larry receive the devastating news that Aunt Hermione has died in her sleep. As the family make arrangements to have her body sent back to England, Margo gets to work on organising a memorial service. Leslie decides that he wants to be with Dionisia, and prepares to let Daphne down gently – however, it turns out that she is pregnant with his child, and her father is determined that they must get married as soon as possible. Gerry becomes fascinated by a wall in the back garden that is covered in insects.
9.00 The Good Karma Hospital. Lydia tries to regain the trust of a former patient.
10.00 ITV News; Weather.
10.20 Peston on Sunday. (R)
11.20 Film: Captain Corelli's Mandolin. (2001)
1.25 Jackpot247. **3.00** Marcella. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.10 The King of Queens. (R) **6.35** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.25** Frasier. (R) **7.55** Frasier. (R) **8.25** Race of Champions 2018. **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** Jamie and Jimmy's Friday Night Feast. (R) **1.30** The Simpsons. (R) **2.00** The Simpsons. (R) **2.30** Formula 1 Australian Grand Prix Highlights. **5.15** The Great Celebrity Bake Off for Stand Up to Cancer. (R)
6.30 Channel 4 News.
7.00 Homes by the Med. Charlie Luxton explores Croatia's Dalmatian coast and islands, and visits a gleaming white property that cascades down the side of a cliff on the island of Brac. Previously shown on More4.
8.00 Escape to the Chateau. Dick celebrates his birthday with a hot air balloon ride over the chateau at sunrise, before setting to work in the kitchen making his own jam and alcohol from the vast quantities of fresh fruit waiting to be harvested in the garden. Angel starts work on a new project of her own – building a geodesic dome on top of a floating platform.
9.00 Homeland. Saul calls an old friend, while Wellington has a problem and Carrie enjoys a win. Starring Claire Danes.
10.15 8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown. Jimmy Carr returns with the comedy version of the words-and-numbers quiz, with Jon Richardson and James Acaster teaming up against Lee Mack and Sarah Millican. (R)
11.10 Film: Rush. (2013) Formula One racers James Hunt and Niki Lauda develop a fierce rivalry over the course of the 1976 championship. Fact-based drama, with Chris Hemsworth and Daniel Bruhl.
1.25 The Last Leg. Adam Hills, Josh Widdicombe and Alex Brooker are joined by celebrity guests for a comic review of the significant moments of the past seven days. Last in the series. (R) **2.20** The Question Jury. Tension mounts and loyalties are put to the test as two of the jurors go head to head in a battle to win the money. (R) **3.15** KOTV Boxing Weekly. Action from bouts around the world. **3.45** Mobil 1: The Grid. (R) **4.40** Coast vs Country. Sara Damergi and Kerr Drummond help Tony and Michelle, who have lived in Oxfordshire for 10 years and are keen to sample a more relaxed pace of life in Dorset. (R) **5.35** Streetmate. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Little Princess. **6.10** Wissper. (R) **6.20** Milkshake! Monkey. (R) **6.25** The Secret Life of Puppies. (R) **6.30** Mofy. (R) **6.35** Simon. (R) **6.40** Simon. (R) **6.45** Peppa Pig. (R) **6.50** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.05** Thomas & Friends. (R) **7.15** Fireman Sam. (R) **7.25** Olly the Little White Van. (R) **7.35** Blaze and the Monster Machines. **7.55** Paw Patrol. (R) **8.15** Nella the Princess Knight. (R) **8.30** Noddy: Toyland Detective. (R) **8.50** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.10** Shimmer and Shine. (R) **9.15** Digby Dragon. (R) **9.35** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.45** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.50** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.25** Football on 5: Goal Rush. (R) **10.50** Cats Make You Laugh Out Loud 4. (R) **11.20** Police Interceptors: Dog Squad Special. (R) **12.20 Film:** The Illusionist. (2006) Mystery thriller, starring Edward Norton. **2.25 Film:** The Man in the Iron Mask. (1998) Swashbuckling adventure, starring Leonardo DiCaprio. **4.45 Film:** A Knight's Tale. (2001) Medieval comedy adventure, starring Heath Ledger. **5.45** 5 News Update. **5.50 Film:** A Knight's Tale. (2001) Concluded.
7.15 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. The agents try to recover more than £12,000 owed by a jeweller to one of his suppliers, and chase up more than £5,000 owed by a tenant to her former landlord for rent arrears. (R)
8.00 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. Agents chase more than £1,700 in unpaid parking fines in south-east London, but struggle to pinpoint the debtor. Meanwhile, officers in north Wales try to recover the £2,000 owed by a tradesman to a former employer, and in Kent agents chase £8,000 owed by a jewellery shop to two former employees. (R)
8.55 5 News Weekend.
9.00 Film: The Bodyguard. (1992) A famous singer subjected to death threats by an obsessive fan is persuaded to hire a former secret service agent as her bodyguard, but neither of them realise the effect they are about to have on each other's lives. Romantic thriller, starring Kevin Costner.
10.00 5 News Update.
10.05 Film: The Bodyguard. (1992) Concluded.
11.35 Film: Whitney Houston: A Tragic Love. (2015)
1.20 Whitney Houston: Her Greatest Hits. (R) **2.10** SuperCasino. **3.10** Greatest Ever Celebrity Wind Ups. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Only Connect **7.30** University Challenge **8.00** Ancient Greece: The Greatest Show on Earth **9.00** Capability Brown's Unfinished Garden **10.00** The Banker's Guide to Art **11.30** The Secret Life of Children's Books **12.00** The World's Most Beautiful Eggs: The Genius of Carl Faberge **1.00** Moominland Tales: The Life of Tove Jansson **2.00** Capability Brown's Unfinished Garden **3.00** And Then There Were None **4.00** Close
ITV2
12.10 You've Been Framed!: Top 100 Animals **1.10** The Voice UK **3.05** Britain's Got Talent: Stephen's Unsung Heroes **4.10 Film:** Hotel Transylvania 2 (2015) **5.10** FYI Daily **5.15 Film:** Hotel Transylvania 2 (2015) **5.55 Film:** Happy Feet Two (2011) **6.55** FYI Daily **7.00 Film:** Happy Feet Two (2011) **8.00 Film:** Skyfall (2012) **9.00** FYI Daily **9.05 Film:** Skyfall (2012) **10.50** Family Guy **12.20** American Dad! **1.15** Ibiza Weekender **2.20** Teleshopping **5.50** ITV2 Nightscreen
ITV3
11.55 A Touch of Frost **1.55 Film:** Brief Encounter (1945) **3.40 Film:** The Theory of Everything (2014) **6.00** Vera **8.00** The Cruise **9.00** Joanna Lumley's Trans-Siberian Adventure **10.00** Murder on the Home Front **12.05 Film:** Evil Under the Sun (1982) **2.25** Blue Murder **3.40** Rising Damp **4.05** Road to Avonlea **5.45** ITV3 Nightscreen
ITV4
12.45 Live Snooker: Players Championship. The opening session of the final from Venue Cymru, Llandudno. **5.15** Storage Wars **6.45** Live Snooker: Players Championship. **11.15 Film:** Senna (2010) **12.15** FYI Daily **12.20 Film:** Senna (2010) **1.25** It's Not Rocket Science **2.30** Fishing Allstars **3.00** Teleshopping
E4
11.30 The Goldbergs **1.30** The Big Bang Theory **5.00** The Goldbergs **5.30** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **6.00** Young Sheldon **6.30** The Big Bang Theory **6.55 Film:** Fantastic Four (2005) **9.00** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **10.00** The Inbetweeners **11.10** The Big Bang Theory **12.05** Five Star Hotel **3.05** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **3.50** Hollyoaks
Film4
11.00 Bridge to Terabithia (2007) **1.00** Ever After: A Cinderella Story (1998) **3.35** Hugo (2011) **6.05** The Hunger Games: Catching Fire (2013) **9.00** Oblivion (2013) **11.25** Child 44 (2015) **2.05** Submarine (2010) **4.00** Close

Star Reader Travel
Hand picked holidays with you in mind

Your Chronicle in association with Just Go! Holidays

The Flying Scotsman
& Liverpool
Departing Friday 11 May
from Dudley & Stourbridge
Price Includes...
✔ Return coach travel
✔ 2 nights DBB at our selected hotel
✔ Train journey behind the Flying Scotsman on the East Lancashire Railway
✔ En-route visit to Liverpool
3 Days By Coach only £195

Scarborough
& North Yorkshire Moors Railway
Departing Monday 21 May
from Dudley, Halesowen & Stourbridge
Price Includes...
✔ Return coach travel
✔ 4 nights DBB at the Grand Hotel, Scarborough (all meals buffet style)
✔ Entertainment every night
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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY
Kidnapped: Desperate Hours, Channel 5, 3.15pm
An American wife's world is turned upside down when her husband, the son of a Mexican newspaper publisher, is kidnapped. Drama, starring Teri Polo, Esai Morales and Nicholas Gonzalez. Edited for daytime broadcast. (2011)

TUESDAY
Mr & Mrs Smith, Channel 5, 10pm
An outwardly bored suburban couple lead double lives as professional assassins, both unaware of their partner's secret. When they are hired to kill each other, the deadly situation puts some much-needed excitement back into their stale relationship. Comedy adventure, starring Brad Pitt, Angelina Jolie, Vince Vaughn and Adam Brody. (2005)

WEDNESDAY
Under Siege, Channel 5, 11.05pm
Terrorists infiltrate a US battleship in a carefully orchestrated move to steal its arsenal of nuclear weapons, unaware the ship's resourceful cook - a veteran US Navy Seal - and a scantily clad stripper are about to foil their plans. Action adventure, starring Steven Seagal, Erika Eleniak, Gary Busey and Tommy Lee Jones. (1992)

Fast & Furious, Friday, ITV, 9pm

THURSDAY
Buried Secrets, Channel 5, 3.15pm
Former cop Sarah Winters publishes her first novel, and finds herself on the wrong side of the law when her book's plot seems to mirror an all-too-real murder case. Thriller, starring Sarah Carter. (2014)

FRIDAY
Fast & Furious 7, ITV, 9pm
Premiere. After defeating Owen Shaw and his crew and securing amnesty for their past crimes, Dom, Brian and the rest of the team return home to live normal lives again. However Shaw's older brother Deckard - a rogue special forces assassin vows revenge on Dom, who he holds responsible for leaving Owen in a coma. Action thriller sequel, starring Vin Diesel, Jason Statham and Paul Walker in his last film role. (2015)

PICK OF THE WEEK

Famous faces show their naked ambition for a good cause

It takes some cojones to back a film, no matter how good the script is. In 1996, the idea of unemployed Sheffield blokes stripping on stage sounded like a bad idea for a TV one-off, let alone a big screen comedy.

But great films are never born without risk, and by the time it saw the light of day a year later, The Full Monty went from indie curio to major blockbuster.

While other Brit flicks of 1997, like Lawn Dogs and Face, vanished with the skill of a stealth fighter, The Full Monty became a phenomenon.

The VHS copies (and later DVDs) sold out in no time; worthy yet jobbing actors like Tom Wilkinson, Mark Addy and Robert Carlyle were wooed by Hollywood, and aside from Anne Dudley landing an Oscar for her inspired score, the film was turned into a successful stage show.

Last summer, the brand was also adapted for a hit ITV spectacular in which famous faces stripped off to raise awareness of men's cancers.

Now it's back for a new full-frontal extravaganza, and this time it's live from Sheffield, the home of the original movie.

Ashley Banjo and Alexander Armstrong will be putting together a bigger and bolder show, and they are joined by TV presenter Jeff Brazier; former Rugby International star Ugo Monye and TOWIE veteran James Argent.

And there's a load more talent joining them, from the Wanted's Tom Parker, ex-footballer John Hartson, and chef Ainsley Harriot to former EastEnder John Partridge.

They will share their personal stories and learn how to shed their iconic security guard uniforms to stir up a storm on stage in the Steel City. Hopefully they will also inspire more men to make vital checks that could save lives.

"Last year's show was a major success, particularly given it was unknown territory," explains Alexander. "But now we want to see if we can aim for an even better performance to grab people's attention again for this cause.

"Hopefully, we're in for even more fun as we take another bunch of blokes and turn them into show stoppers capable of turning the audience into a frenzy."

Ashley adds: "After the amazing time we had last year, I can't wait to get the chance to teach the 2018 intake how to forget their inhibitions and put on an unforgettable show to raise awareness for this incredibly important issue that really can save lives."

A day after this show airs, some familiar faces will be popping up in another ITV special, The Real Full Monty: Ladies' Night.

Presenters Coleen Nolan and Sarah-Jane Crawford, and actresses Helen Lederer and Ruth Madoc are determined to show the boys how it's done and raise awareness of breast cancer.

They are joined by broadcaster Victoria Derbyshire; Emmerdale's Sally Dexter; reality star Megan McKenna and former Liberty X singer Michelle Heaton.

The Real Full Monty: Live, Wednesday, ITV, 9pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY
Thrifty Ways to - Summer Holiday
Channel 4, 8.30pm
Katie Piper presents a programme giving viewers hot tips on how to shop better for a fraction of the usual price, offering the inside track on ways to get more bang for your buck. She is joined by travel industry expert Amar Latif to demonstrate how to be thrifty about booking a summer holiday - be it family time in Tenerife or a city break in Bath or tips, as well as tricks on how to get cut prices in Orlando. The show offers handy money saving hacks and taps into local knowledge to access the best deals.

TUESDAY
Live International Football
ITV, 7.30pm
England v Italy (Kick-off 8.00pm). Mark Pougatch is joined by Lee Dixon, Ian Wright and Slaven Bilic to present coverage of the friendly match from Wembley Stadium, as England continue their preparations for the 2018 World Cup. With the tournament in Russia only a few months away, Gareth Southgate will see this encounter as an ideal opportunity to assess some of the members in his squad, and potentially play one or two players who have previously been on the fringe of contention, but looking to force their way into his plans.

Come Home
BBC1, 9pm
Award-winning screenwriter Danny Brocklehust is one of the brains behind this three-part family drama. Set in Northern Ireland, it focuses on mother Marie (Paula Malcomson), who decides to walk out on husband Greg (Christopher Eccleston), and their three children. The first episode is told from Greg's perspective, and follows him and their kids as they struggle to comprehend their mother's actions. While Greg juggles work at Farrell Motors, raising his children and coping with the trials and tribulations of dating again, he tries to keep a sense of normality. However, it remains to be seen whether he will be able to move on when he's trapped in the past. With the aid of multiple timeframes, viewpoints and flashbacks, Greg and Marie's story should be THE talking point for many around the UK.

WEDNESDAY
The Assassination of Gianni Versace: American Crime Story
BBC2, 9pm
The fact-based US crime drama continues. Andrew Cunanan invites himself to stay in Minneapolis with friends David Madson and Jeff Trail. Although Jeff has managed to build a new life for himself in the city, he is still troubled by the ending of his US Navy career back in 1995. Meanwhile, Gianni Versace opens up about his relationship with his partner Antonio to a magazine, against the advice of Donatella. Starring Darren Criss, Cody Fern, Finn Wittrock, Edgar Ramirez, Ricky Martin and Penelope Cruz.

Come Home, Tuesday, BBC1, 9pm

THURSDAY
The Real Full Monty: Ladies' Night
ITV, 9pm
Following the success of last year's The Real Full Monty – and last night's follow up – it's the turn of a group of female celebrities to bare all in the name of cancer awareness. However, they won't just be looking to the men and the hit film The Full Monty for inspiration, as the programme also marks 20 years since the ëcalendar girls' of the Rylstone and District WI posed for their iconic nude photos. The ladies taking part are TV presenter Coleen Nolan, broadcaster Victoria Derbyshire, Emmerdale actress Sally Dexter, reality TV star Megan McKenna, former Liberty X singer Michelle Heaton, actress Helen Lederer, TV legend Ruth Madoc and presenter Sarah-Jane Crawford, and the issue of breast cancer awareness is close to all their hearts. But will that be enough to get them over their body issues and inhibitions as they prepare to put on a show?

FRIDAY
Britain's Great Cathedrals with Tony Robinson
Channel 5, 8pm
New series. The actor visits York Minster, which over the past 800 years, has been a backdrop to some of the most dramatic events in British history. It houses more than half of all the world's medieval glass, including the Rose Window, commissioned by Henry VIII, and the East Window, the largest stained glass window in the world. A succession of outspoken bishops of York have defied Nazis, married kings and queens, and more recently championed equality with Archbishop John Sentamu, the country's first black bishop, consecrating the world's first female bishop, Libby Lane, in 2014.

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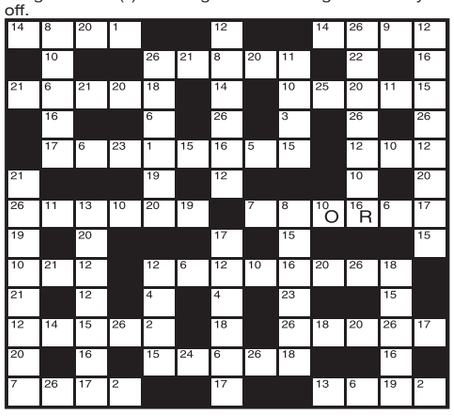
Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



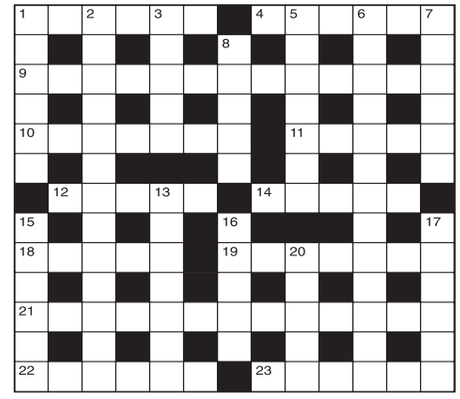
1	14
2	15
3	16 R
4	17
5	18
6	19
7	20
8	21
9	22
10 O	23
11	24
12	25
13	26

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
F	H	G	D	N	X	R	U	M	K	C	W	P
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
J	S	I	Q	O	Z	E	V	A	T	L	B	Y

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.



Cryptic Clues:

Across

1. Unsavoury scoundrel (3,3)
4. This singer, given a chance, could win a fortune (6)
9. A job done for nothing? (9,4)
10. Listens out for recruits (7)
11. Superstitious symbol of many following a gambling system (5)
12. Am given little scope (5)
14. Bird doctor goes round to object (5)
18. Shape altered a great deal (5)
19. A bone from Munster (7)
21. Having the wisdom not to get excited (13)
22. What water pipes should be kept behind? (6)
23. Credit is twice provided in an emergency (6)

Down

1. Strike for which the catering staff is responsible (6)
2. Ambiguous combination of nobleman and guide (6,7)
3. Entrances groups of spectators (5)
5. It may be worn as a favour (7)
6. What a metalworker may say when they go wrong? (5,8)
7. I smoke a strange mixture, being a northerner (6)
8. A case in point? Finish with just the opposite (5)
13. Waiting to be stocked (2,5)
15. The Spanish man comes first in church (6)
16. Legally prevent poets being translated (5)
17. Yet they may form a large part of the weekly wash (6)
20. Three mixed the upper air (5)

Quick Clues:

Across

1. Far off (6)
4. Self-possession (6)
9. Unselfish (13)
10. Disease (7)
11. Scorch (5)
12. Pungent (5)
14. Viper (5)
18. Cordage (5)
19. Plant (7)
21. On sale, cheaply (5,3,1,4)
22. Signify (6)
23. Pure (6)

Down

1. Diminish (6)
2. Mistaken idea (13)
3. Taut (5)
5. Delighted (7)
6. In impatient suspense (2,11)
7. Pester (6)
8. Postpone (5)
13. Visible (2,5)
15. Cold (6)
16. Pitch (5)
17. Shoe (6)
20. Confound (5)

Sudoku

		2			8		5	
	9		2	6		3		
		6			5	7		
7	4				2	8		
3			4		1			5
		5	6				4	1
		8	3			5		
9		7			6		3	2
	2			5				

Fill in the grid above so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

8	6	3	2	1	4	7	9	5
1	2	4	5	9	7	6	3	8
9	7	5	6	8	3	4	2	1
5	3	1	9	7	6	8	4	2
6	8	7	3	4	2	1	5	9
2	4	9	1	5	8	3	6	7
4	5	8	7	3	9	2	1	6
7	1	2	4	6	5	9	8	3
3	9	6	8	2	1	5	7	4

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Health resort; 7 Staff; 8 Acute; 9 Aid; 10 Distended; 11 Panama; 12 Dangle; 15 Recondite; 17 Yes; 18 Noise; 19 Timed; 21 Consolidates. Down: 1 Heir apparent; 2 Tea; 3 Refuse; 4 Stalemate; 5 Round; 6 Heedlessness; 7 Sedan; 10 Domineers; 13 Guyed; 14 Pistol; 16 Cairo; 20 Mad.
QUICK - Across: 1 San Francisco; 7 After; 8 Train; 9 Tie; 10 Fragrance; 11 Nudist; 12 Reform; 15 Sepulchre; 17 Inn; 18 Arena; 19 Ocean; 21 Here and there. Down: 1 Shooting star; 2 Rot; 3 Normal; 4 Intervene; 5 Chain; 6 Interminable; 7 Ahead; 10 Fusillade; 13 Orion; 14 Thrown; 16 Piece; 20 Eat.

Quiz

1. Whose novel Brideshead Revisited was published in 1945?
2. On which Hebridean island is Fingal's Cave?
3. Which A-Team star died in 1994?
4. Which British coin was discontinued in 1961?
5. Which ceremonial office is held by the Lordship of Scrivelsby, Lincolnshire?
6. Who wrote the classic jazz number Round Midnight?
7. What is the capital of Croatia?
8. Who made his US film debut as Christ in The Greatest Story Ever Told?
9. Which Indian state's name is Sanskrit for 'five rivers'?
10. Who is the host of University Challenge?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 7; 2 La Paz; 3 Utah; 4 Woolsack; 5 Kigali; 6 Opium; 7 Sir Christopher Wren; 8 Volga; 9 Vulcan; 10 Yukon.

Niner: SLOUCHING

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

239211 gives a British city,
6539689 gives a British town,
272486 gives a second British town.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

No Lye-ing, this was perfect night out

WE have a wonderful afternoon and evening. We had to – because it was by order of the Peaky Blinders!

Having booked an evening meal at the Windsor Castle Inn in Lye we thought we'd try somewhere already renowned for its good food. And, perhaps just as importantly, a place that brewed its own award-winning beer on site and had a gin emporium.

The Saturday just happened to clash with one of Sadler's now famous Peaky Blinders-themed days and we were lucky to have stumbled across it. The only Peaky-style clothing I own is a Christmas T-shirt, which my wife, Kelly, banned me from wearing (it was approaching spring after all) so we went as we were.

Tuck into the crab and scallop dish

Idea for pub grub – the Windsor Castle Inn

QUAINT

However, many had made the effort and it really was a set back in time when we enjoyed a few meal drinks in Sadler's Brewhouse & Bar, just behind Lye Railway Station, with live music and draft real ales.

We then made our way to the Windsor Castle Inn, a five-minute walk, for our meal. The Windsor is a nice, quaint pub that always serves at least 10 of its own real ales.

The brewery started in 1900, founded by Nathaniel Sadler, the great, great grandfather to Emily and Chris Sadler. It supplied its 12-tied public houses, the most famous being The Windsor Castle, the original brewery tap house, first based in Oldbury.

Now in Lye, near Stourbridge, the brewery has once again become a thriving family-run microbrewery, owned by Chris Sadler, supplying public houses and supermarkets with Sadler's cask and bottled ales throughout the Midlands and country. And there were plenty of groups enjoying brewery tours too – so if anyone fancies soaking up some of the pub's rich history something like that would be worth a punt. The 1920-inspired Dr Hardwicke's Gin Emporium, which opened in the summer, also boasts more than 35 spirits.

There was a little drama when we arrived as there had been a mix-up with our booking – and we didn't exist according to their records. But after producing the email apologies were made and they found us a table for two. We were even offered a free round of drinks.

As it was Peaky-themed night the pub was busy, so if you're thinking of a romantic or quiet evening for two, it's perhaps best to avoid such an evening. However, we loved the atmosphere and were treated superbly by the staff, who have also won awards for their service.

So it was finally time to order some starters and I have to say we guessed right when we decided to share one because it was more than ample. We opted for the crab and scallop thermidor, which came with mixed leaves and homemade bread. Each homemade meal comes with a recommendation of the perfect pint of craft beer to accompany the food. For me, fish is always the number one option and luckily the Windsor Castle Inn has its fish delivered fresh from the markets every morning. The loin of cod, served with a seafood ragout, seasonal vegetables and a choice of dauphinoise or hand-cut chips stole the show.

Kelly went for the pork medley, a trio of braised pork belly, pork and leek sausage, and grilled pork chop on a bed of creamy mashed potato served with black pudding, cider jus and seasonal vegetables. 'Amazing' was how she described it.

So if you enjoy real ales, a selection of gins and some lovely homemade food, it's worth giving The Windsor Castle Inn a try.

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Three-bedroom semi-detached recently put on the market

GORNAL WOOD
£179,950 <<<

New to the property market, this three-bedroomed semi-detached house in Linley Grove, Gornal Wood, Dudley, lies in a pleasant cul-de-sac location.

Being well maintained and improved, with double glazing and gas central heating, it is for sale through Wakeman Esate Agents at £179,950.

Its accommodation includes an entrance hall, lounge/dining room, a kitchen, landing, three bedrooms, a bathroom, garage, parking and gardens.

It is within easy reach of Gornal village where a wide range of amenities are available together with access to Dudley, Sedgley and surrounding centres.

The lounge/dining room has a marble agglomerate insert and hearth, plus a gas living flame fire.

Contact Wakeman on 01384 459999.

Two-bedroomed apartment for sale

DUDLEY
£114,950

This modern two-bedroomed purpose-built lower ground floor apartment in Lingwood Hall, 12 St James Road, Dudley, is for sale through Trinity Property at £114,950 with no chain.

The property's accommodation briefly comprises a modern fitted kitchen with a patio door to the communal gardens and patio area.

This leads to a large lounge, with doors to the internal hallway, further doors lead to two double bedrooms – with the master bedroom having an en-suite shower/WC off. There is also a house bathroom/WC and front and rear entrances to the apartment. Outside, this home has allocated and secure gated parking.

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MOTORING

YOUR WEEKLY GUIDE TO THE BEST CARS ON THE MARKET

Fine ride and comfort will win friends

By Ian Donaldson

Hallelujah! A car maker has produced an affordable car that majors on comfort, won't set a lap record round a race track and is not – ever – described as 'sporty'.

For goodness sake, it doesn't even have a rev counter (when did you last look at yours?) and the suspension has 20 patents applied for and has one aim in life; to smooth away the bumpy horrors beneath the tyres.

So, the new Citroën C4 Cactus starts off on the right foot by simply being different to a slew of rivals all seemingly designed by hotheads who would really rather be Lewis Hamilton.

Then you discover that Citroën has added soundproofing to the car and made the rear screen thicker, all in the hunt for a quieter life on board. And still the car weighs less than its rivals, to the benefit of economy and emissions.

Upmarket

All this extra attention has been paid to a car that's basically been around since 2014, when its standout feature was the big wodges of plastic padding along the flanks – Airbumps in Citroënspeak – with back-up protection on the car's extremities.

Well, they've been toned down drastically for the new C4 Cactus (vestiges can still be spotted on the car's lower portions) as its maker attempts to add an upmarket feel to something they must have felt looked a bit too simply basic before.

In the process an impressive 90 per cent of what you see is new, from a wider look to the front and rear and a choice of nine body colours and four colour packs that let you add touches of black, white, red or silver to front fog light trim and the reduced Airbump panels.

Inside, the old C4 Cactus's feel of more lounge than car continues and still looks as pleasantly different as ever, with four distinct styles on offer, all of them applied also to new seats that Citroën calls Advanced Comfort but which are really more the old ones with added padding – and comfy with it.

Deeper thought is applied to the suspension, often a talking point in older and now defunct Citroën models. The new set-up is simpler than those but introduces welcome new thinking, with shock absorbers that do away with rubber bump stops and use extra hydraulic cushions at the extremities of suspension travel.

And it works. Within a few metres of setting off you sense the new C4 Cactus is working hard on your behalf to isolate you and your passengers from the jolts and ridges that make up a modern road. It's not the magic carpet ride Citroën boasts about, but it is instantly and continually more comfortable than its rivals.

The car is a little shorter than, say, a VW Golf and has enough but hardly generous room in the rear seat. Boot capacity is good enough not to be a talking point either.

Buy the cheapest new C4 Cactus – the £17,265 Feel Edition and you won't have the clever suspension. You also won't have much performance (105mph 13.1 seconds to 62mph) with a 1.2 litre non-turbo 81bhp petrol engine doing the work.

Economy and emissions (61.4mpg combined and 105g/km) are respectable but it's little wonder Citroën thinks the most popular newcomer will be dearer and perkier, in the shape of the £19,865 108bhp petrol model in Flair trim.

Its performance and economy (117mph, 9.4 seconds, 65.7mpg, 100g/km) make a convincing case for this as the sweetspot of the new range, coming with the clever suspension and a range of standard kit from sat nav and 17ins alloys to automatic air conditioning, big glass sunroof and active safety braking.

Second least expensive of the new range is a Feel trimmed car (with the Feel Edition as entry level come-on), with prices from £17,965 and standard kit that includes 16ins alloy wheels, DAB radio, air conditioning, cruise control and a space saver spare wheel.

As well as the 82 and 100 (metric) horsepower engines there's a 130 horsepower version and a 100 hp diesel and the 110 model can be had with an automatic transmission (£21,165).

Out on a mix of UK roads, the 130 hp C4 Cactus impressed with a surprising turn of speed (and the pleasant thrum of a three-cylinder engine) and 49.5mpg on the trip computer suggests an economical life in the real world, where the car's fine ride and emphasis on comfort are going to win it many friends.

The new Citroën C4 Cactus starts off on the right foot by simply being different to a slew of rivals all seemingly designed by hotheads

Japanese manufacturer dominates

Toyota's C-HR is good value-for-money

Toyota and Lexus dominate a list of 10 best depreciation-busting hybrids.

Automotive data experts have analysed the price of a range of hybrids to find which models lose the least money after one year of ownership

Buyers looking for a good value-for-money hybrid should opt for a Toyota C-HR, according to automotive data experts Cap HPI.

The funky-styled crossover, which was introduced late in 2016, topped a list of 10 depreciation-busting electrified vehicles, which looked at the price for new compared with the value after one year and 10,000 miles.

According to Cap HPI, the C-HR retains 84.5 per cent in this time, losing about £4,000 from its average new price of £26,301.

The list is dominated by Japanese sister companies Toyota and Lexus, which take six of the 10 spots. Behind the C-HR in second place is the Lexus NX SUV, which retains 79.5 per cent of its average new price of £38,976, while close behind in third is the Toyota Prius+, which holds 78.6 per cent of its £29,688 price.

Cars from the Japanese manufacturers were also in fifth (Toyota Rav4, 77.4 per cent), seventh (Toyota Prius, 76.6 per cent), and ninth (Lexus IS, 74.4 per cent).

Other vehicles were the Suzuki Ignis in fourth for retaining 78.3 per cent of its £13,444 price, and the Kia Niro in sixth and eighth for holding between 77.2 and 74.8 per cent of its value, depending on the model. The Hyundai Ioniq propped up the list, retaining 74.1 per cent of its £21,740 purchase price.

New Ford Fiesta ST gets package of the latest technology

Ford has revealed that the new Fiesta ST will get a limited-slip differential and a newly patented suspension technology as it fights to outperform its much-loved predecessor.

The previous generation hot supermini was widely regarded by the motoring press to be one of the best affordable drivers' cars on the market while on sale between 2013 and 2017, so the updated version has been eagerly anticipated – and Ford is clearly not pulling any punches when it comes to surpassing the old model.

An optional mechanical limited-slip differential (LSD) will be offered on the new ST, which will help to tame the power going through the front wheels, providing more grip when accelerating, particularly out of corners.

The system is common on larger, more expensive hot hatches, but is incredibly rare in the fast supermini segment. Ford says it works in tandem with the company's 'torque vectoring control' system, which uses the brakes to slow the inside wheel in corners to reduce understeer.

Leo Roeks, European Ford performance director, said: "Performance car drivers will be familiar with the dreaded 'one-wheel peel', where a fast corner exit is hampered by an overload of torque to the inside wheel.

"We've tuned the all-new Fiesta ST's mechanical LSD option to work seamlessly with enhanced torque vectoring control to deliver the best possible natural traction without 'burning away' excess torque with brake interventions."

Ford has also created a new rear suspension set-up, which it calls 'force vectoring springs'. The American car manufacturer says the technology stabilises the back of the car and provides better lateral stiffness, resulting in sharper turn-in without any compromise on comfort. The springs are 10kg lighter than the standard set-up, too.

Under the bonnet sits a 1.5-litre three-cylinder petrol engine making 197bhp and 250Nm of torque.

To make the most of the performance, the Fiesta ST gets a new launch control system, resulting in a 0-60mph time of 6.5 seconds, while the top speed is 144mph.

Ford is yet to confirm the price of the new Fiesta ST, but expect it to approach £19,000 for the entry-level model on account of the heavy investment that's gone into outclassing the old version, which topped out at around £18,000 in ST-3 guise.

Deliveries are expected to begin in late spring.

Vauxhall marks 25 years of Corsa with great deal

The performance version of the Corsa – the VXR

By James Parker

Vauxhall marks a 25th birthday with a special offer on the iconic Corsa.

An era famous for Britpop, Walkmans, shell suits and The Spice Girls, the 1990s was a standout decade for British culture that welcomed another icon in 1993 – the Vauxhall Corsa.

One of the nation's most beloved vehicles, the Corsa, is celebrating its 25th year in the UK, and to mark the occasion Vauxhall is offering a brand new Corsa from just £149 per month, with a £149 initial rental* – just in time for it to wear a new '18' plate, too.

In a deal that would have surprised buyers back in 1993, let alone 2018, the Vauxhall Corsa on offer – an Energy three-door 1.4 (75PS) – is worlds apart from its original namesake.

For example, who'd have thought 25 years ago that a personal assistant could be accessed directly from the comfort of your car via Corsa's clever OnStar system?

But Vauxhall's best-seller has always moved with the times.

The Corsa was born with cassette players and now offers Apple CarPlay; its most popular engines have almost doubled in power; and its interior dimensions have grown significantly. But while design and tech have changed over 25 years, the Corsa's amazing value hasn't, its price only increasing by £3,850.

The Corsa A was renamed the Vauxhall Nova

The original Corsa Supermini was first introduced alongside supermodels Kate Moss, Naomi Campbell, Christy Turlington and Linda Evangelista.

Like Kate Moss, who also made her screen debut at the time, the Corsa has been part of British culture since 1993.

As Vauxhall's best-selling model, over two million have been sold in the United Kingdom – that's the equivalent of nine purchases an hour.

Leon Caruso, retail sales director at Vauxhall Motors comments: "The Corsa has played such an integral part in British culture over the past 25 years, I think it'd be difficult to find someone who hasn't owned or had a friend or family member who has owned a model.

"That's why we're celebrating the Corsa's quarter-century anniversary year with our best-ever offer: a Corsa Energy for just £149 per month, with a £149 initial rental*.

"I encourage you to hot foot it down to your local Vauxhall retailer to take advantage of this fantastic, industry-leading offer."

For more details on the Corsa offer, go online to http://www.vauxhall.co.uk or visit your local Vauxhall retailer.

*Terms and conditions apply.

A new Corsa could cost just £149 per month

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15 65	**ADAM GLAM 1.4** 3DR PURPLE FICTION 19,600 MILES TECH PACK	£8995	£8795	£200
15 65	**ADAM SLAM 1.4** 3DR RED N ROLL 18,200 MILES		£9295	
16 16	**ADAM ENERGISED 1.2** I'LL BE BLACK 8,200 MILES	£9495	£9295	£200
16 66	**ADAM ENERGISED 1.2** RED N ROLL 6,500 MILES		£9495	
17 17	**ADAM ENERGISED 1.2** LET IT BLUE DELIVERY MILES 29 ONLY!		£9995	

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12 62	**CORSA ACTIVE 1.4** 3DR ASTEROID GREY ONLY 28,500 MILES		£5995	
14 14	**CORSA S 1.2** 5DR OLYMPIC WHITE 28,600 MILES		£5995	
12 12	**CORSA LTD 1.2** 3DR OLYMPIC WHITE/BLACK ONLY 27,300 MILES	£6495	£6295	£200
13 63	**CORSA SXI 1.4** 5DR ASTEROID GREY 38,000 MILES	£6495	£6195	£300
14 63	**CORSA SXI 1.4** 3DR OLYMPIC WHITE ONLY 14,700 MILES	£6495	£6250	£245
12 62	**CORSA SRI 1.4** 3DR CARBON FLASH 33,600 MILES	£6795	£6495	£300
13 63	**CORSA LTD EDN 1.2** 3DR FLAME RED 25,200 MILES	£6995	£6595	£400
11 61	**CORSA SE 1.4 AUTOMATIC** 5DR ASTEROID GREY ONLY 27,000 MILES		£6695	
14 64	**CORSA EXCITE 1.4** 5DR DEEP SKY BLUE 27,300 MILES		£6695	
14 14	**CORSA SXI 1.4** 5DR SOVEREIGN SILVER 43,700 MILES	£6995	£6795	£200
15 15	**NEW CORSA LIFE 1.2** 3DR FLAME RED 23,100 MILES		£6995	
14 14	**CORSA LTD EDN 1.2** 3DR FLAME RED 20,500 MILES		£7295	
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15 15	**CORSA LTD EDN 1.4** 5DR OLYMPIC WHITE 31,300 MILES		£8495	
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16 16	**NEW CORSA LTD EDN 1.4** 3DR OLYMPIC WHITE ONLY 2,500 MILES		£9495	
16 16	**CORSA LIMITED EDITION 1.4** 3DR CARBON FLASH 7,600 MILES		£8695	
16 16	**CORSA VXR 1.6T** SATIN STEEL GREY 6,000 MILES (PERFORMANCE PACK)		£13295	

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13 63	**ASTRA ENERGY 1.6** 5DR TECHNICAL GREY 45,800 MILES	£6995	£6750	£245
14 14	**ASTRA ENERGY 1.4** 5DR ASTEROID GREY 22,000 MILES	£7495	£6995	£500
15 65	**ASTRA LTD EDN 1.4TURBO** OLYMPIC WHITE 17,300 MILES		£9995	
16 16	**ASTRA SRI 1.0T** 5DR POWER RED 12,500 MILES	£11495	£1195	£300
16 66	**ASTRA SRI NAV 1.6CDTI 136ps** 5DR POWER RED 12,800 MILES EX DEMO		£13995	
16 66	**ASTRA ELITE 1.6CDTI 136PS SPORTS TOURER** 5DR DEEP SKY BLUE 14,000 MILES	£14995	£13995	£1000
15 15	**ASTRA VXR 2.0T 280ps** BUZZ BLUE 20,600 MILES *MASSIVE SPEC*		£16995	
11 11	**MERIVA SE 1.4** 5DR SILVER LIGHTNING 40,000 MILES		£5495	
15 15	**MERIVA LIFE 1.4** 5DR OLYMPIC WHITE 16,500 MILES	£7795	£7295	£500
14 64	**MERIVA TECHLINE 1.4** 5DR PEPPERDUST 21,400 MILES	£7995	£7595	£400
17 67	**MERIVA LIFE 1.4** 5DR CHOICE OF COLOURS DELIVERY MILES	£10995	£9895	£1100
16 66	**ZAFIRA TOURER TECHLINE 1.6CDTI** SOVEREIGN SILVER 13,500 MILES EX DEMO		£15495	

MOKKA, MOKKA X & ANTARA

		WAS	NOW	SAVE
14 14	**MOKKA TECHLINE 1.7CDTI** 5DR SUMMIT WHITE 44,600 MILES		£9995	
15 65	**MOKKA EXCLUSIV 1.6** 5DR OLYMPIC WHITE 9,000 MILES	£10895	£10495	£400
15 65	**MOKKA EXCLUSIV 1.6CDTI** CARBON FLASH 11,500 MILES	£11000	£10795	£205
15 65	**MOKKA TECHLINE 1.6** 5DR SUMMIT WHITE 9,700 MILES		£11695	
15 65	**MOKKA TECHLINE 1.6CDTI** ORANGE ROCK 13,700 MILES		£11995	
15 15	**MOKKA SE 1.7CDTI AUTOMATIC** ASTEROID GREY 16,000 MILES		£11995	
17 17	**MOKKA X ELITE NAV 1.4T** BORACAY BLUE 12,300 MILES		£15995	
17 17	**MOKKA X ELITE NAV 1.4T** SOVEREIGN SILVER 12,200 MILES		£15995	
17 17	**MOKKA X ELITE NAV 1.4T** QUANTUM GREY 13,950 MILES		£15795	
17 17	**MOKKA X ELITE NAV 1.4T 4X4** SUMMIT WHITE 11,100 MILES REAR CAMERA		£17795	
16 16	**ANTARA DIAMOND 2.2CDTI 163ps** 5DR CARBON FLASH 26,950 MILES		£10695	

INSIGNIA

		WAS	NOW	SAVE
14 64	**INSIGNIA TECHLINE 2.0CDTI** 5DR SOVEREIGN SILVER 25,400 MILES PLUS PACK		£10495	
16 16	**INSIGNIA SRI NAV 2.0CDTI** 5DR SILVER LAKE 36,800 MILES		£10995	
15 15	**INSIGNIA SRI NAV 2.0CDTI** 5DR SILVER LAKE 22,000 MILES		£11495	

OTHER FRANCHISES

		WAS	NOW	SAVE
09 59	**HYUNDAI I10 CLASSIC 1.2** 5DR MET SILVER 34,600 MILES		£3795	
16 16	**SUZUKI SWIFT SZ-L SAT NAV 1.2** 3DR RED 23,800 MILES		£8495	
15 65	**FORD FIESTA ZETEC 1.25** 5DR RED 15,000 MILES		£8495	
16 16	**DACIA SANDEO STEPWAY LAUREATE 0.9TCE** 5DR MET BLUE 19,400 MILES	£8995	£8295	£700
17 66	**KIA PICANTO SE 1.0** 5DR MET BLACK 2,300 MILES		£8995	
15 15	**CITROEN DS3 PURE TECH DSTYLE PLUS 1.2** 3DR WHITE 16,300 MILES	£9495	£8995	£500
12 12	**MINI COUNTRYMAN COOPER 1.6D** 5DR WHITE/BLACK 42,200 MILES		£9495	
14 64	**NISSAN JUKE ACENTA PREMIUM DIG-T 1.2** 5DR MET BLACK 8,000 MILES		£10495	
16 16	**CITROEN C4 CACTUS FLAIR 1.6HDI SAT NAV** RED 24,000 MILES	£10295	£9995	£300
15 15	**DACIA DUSTER LAUREATE 1.5DCI 4X4** 5DR WHITE 20,000 MILES	£10495	£10295	£200
16 16	**HYUNDAI IX20 SE 1.4 BLUE DRIVE** 5DR WHITE 8,200 MILES		£10695	
16 16	**JEEP RENEGADE SPORT 1.6 MULTIJET** 5DR MET BLACK 33,900 MILES		£11495	
15 15	**MECEDES BENZ A180 SE AUTO** 5DR MET GREY 22,000 MILES	£14000	£13750	£250
11 61	**LR RANGE ROVER EVOQUE DYNAMIC SI4 AUTO 4WD** 3DR WHITE/BLACK 55,200 MILES	£21989	£21495	£494

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Stourbridge Chronicle Thursday, March 22, 2018

New Ka+ line-up includes crossover

By James Parker

Ford has unveiled its new Ka+ range, which includes an SUV-inspired crossover.

With a larger interior space than its predecessor, and a fresh tech update, the new range of Ford's smallest car goes on sale later this year.

Prices start from £10,795, with the Ka+ plus also available in either Studio or Zetec spec.

Lifestyles

The new Ka+ Active crossover is 23mm higher than its sister model, has a wider chassis, a larger front anti-roll bar, and comes equipped with roof rails – which Ford says supports active lifestyles. 'Unique' 15-inch alloy wheels and Canyon Ridge bronze paint are also offered.

The Ka+ Active is the second Active car to be offered by the American manufacturer, following the launch of the Fiesta Active.

Ford says the new Ka+ Active crossover "further enhances" its compact five-door model, with its price making it more accessible to the wider market.

The new range comes with a choice of powertrains, including Ford's new 1.2-litre, three-cylinder petrol engine – offering 70bhp – and, for the first time on a Ka+ model, a 94bhp 1.5-litre TDCi diesel engine.

Speaking about the inclusion of a crossover in the range, Roelant de Waard, vice president of marketing, sales and service, said: "Last year Ford sold more than 200,000 SUVs in Europe for the first time, and demand for SUV and crossover models has never been higher.

"Our new Ford Ka+ Active model will this year make the crossover affordable to even greater numbers of customers, with aspirational styling, sophisticated technologies customers would expect to see in much more expensive cars."

There's now more inside space

Other tech includes Ford's SYNC 3 communications and entertainment system via the 6.5-inch touchscreen, Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, rain-sensitive wipers, auto headlamps, heated windscreen, heated front seats, climate control, and rear parking sensors.

Mr De Waard said: "Ford has sold more than 61,000 Ka+ models since we first introduced the it in late 2016, and now we're offering customers even more choice with our first Ka+ diesel engine for greater fuel-efficiency and cruising ability, and all-new petrol powertrains that are more responsive in town, all meeting the latest stringent emissions standards."

The new range of Ford's smallest car goes on sale later this year

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12 62	PEUGEOT 208 ACTIVE 1.4 HDI 5DR BLUE 32015 MILES	£5,995	£5,253
12 62	HYUNDAI I20 ACTIVE 5DR HB GREY 41015 MILES	£5,995	£5,695
12 12	MERCEDES BENZ A160 1.5 BLUE SILVER 48866 MILES	£5,995	£5,897
13 63	SKODA FABIA SE 1.2 *ALLOYS* BLUE 17803 MILES	£6,995	£6,387
13 13	SEAT IBIZA EST 1.6 FR TDI *SAT NAV* BLACK 62045 MILES	£6,995	£6,595
09 09	MINI COOPER S 1.6 CHILLI PACK GREY 44000 MILES	£6,995	£6,782
13 13	HYUNDAI IX20 ACTIVE 1.4 GREY 42000 MILES	£6,995	£6,787
15 15	VOLKSWAGON UP HIGH *SAT NAV* BLACK 23276 MILES	£7,750	£7,198
14 14	SPLASH 5DR HAT 1.2 SZ4 AUTO BLUE 6301 MILES	£7,650	£7,398
13 13	FORD FOCUS 1.6 ZETEC 125 AUTO SILVER 25436 MILES	£7,995	£7,695
14 64	SKODA OCTAVIA EST SE BUSINESS TDI RED 49515 MILES	£9,450	£8,912
12 62	VOLKSWAGEN GOLF CONVERTABLE 1.4 TSI WHITE 50044 MILES	£9,495	£8,964
15 15	MINI ONE 3DR * £20 TAX* RED 16328 10495 MILES		£9,842
15 15	VOLKSWAGEN BEETLE DESIGN RETRO WHITE 10519 MILES	£12,495	£11,765
14 14	AUDI A1 S LINE TFSI WHITE 35990 MILES	£12,645	£12,000
17 17	RENAULT CAPTUR DYNAM S NAV DC SILVER 9650 MILES	£12,995	£12,295
15 65	VOLKSWAGEN POLO 1.8 GTI 5DR H WHITE 26127 MILES	£14,350	£13,687
15 15	AUDI A4 SE TECHNIK TDI CVT 4D GREY 36951 MILES	£14,995	£14,341
13 13	RR EVOQUE DYNAMIC ENTERTAINMENT SYST BLACK 47692 MILES	£26,995	£25,414

OTHER USED STOCK

12 12	MINI COOPER S 1.6 JCW CHILLY P BLACK 47000 MILES	£12,812
12 62	FORD FOCUS ZETEC 1.6 TDCI RED 52802 MILES	£7,495
13 63	VAUXHALL ADAM 1.4I ECOFLEX SL RED 30895 MILES	£7,995
15 15	NISSAN NOTE ACENTA PREMIUM 1.2 GREY 20000 MILES	£7,846
12 12	VAUXHALL CORSA ACTIVE 1.2 3DR RED 47000 MILES	£4,695
06 06	AUDI A3 SE TDI 5DOOR 2.0 BLUE 58156 MILES	£5,495
17 17	HYUNDAI I800 SE CRDI SILVER 11707 MILES	£17,995
08 58	NISSAN NOTE ACCENTA 1.4 BLUE 32000 MILES	£3,995
16 16	RANGE ROVER EVOQUE 2.0 SE GOLD 22982 MILES	£25,751
04 04	CHRYSLER CROSSFIRE COUPE 3.2 V6 SILVER 59987 MILES	£5,995
16 16	JEEP RENEGADE LTD ESTATE 1.6 WHITE 21900 MILES	£13,995
13 13	RENAULT CLIO EXPRESSION PLUS 1.2 WHITE 36722 MILES	£6,995
15 15	KIA PICANTO 1.0 SR7 5DR RED 30507 MILES	£5,995
13 13	CITROEN C1 VTR+ 5DR HB BLUE 32263 MILES	SOLD
13 63	FIAT 500 POP 1.2 3DR HB GOLD 36955 MILES	£5,995
11 61	VAUXHALL INSIGNIA 2.0D SRI NAV SILVER 33475 MILES	£6,750
11 11	FIAT 500 LOUNGE 1.2 3DR HB SILVER 42366 MILES	£5,995
15 65	SUZUKI JIMNY 1.3 VVT SZ4 3DR SILVER 27679 MILES	£11,695
15 15	BMW 220D XDRIVE M SPORT AUTO WHITE 18124 MILES	£19,995
14 64	FORD FOCUS ZETEC TDCI 1.6 5DR SILVER 10160 MILES	£9,995
09 59	PEUGEOT 107 URBAN 1.0 5DR HB BLACK 40428 MILES	£3,695
11 11	CITROEN C3 VTR+ 5DR HB RED 29548 MILES	£5,795
11 11	FORD FIESTA ZETEC TDCI 70 5DR SILVER 15200 MILES	£6,695
16 66	CITROEN C1 FLAIR PURETECH 5DR RED 2240 MILES	£7,995

VANS

14 64	VAUXHALL COMBO 200 L1H1 CDTI BLACK 30835 MILES	£6,650+VAT
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FOR FREE QUOTE CALL:
07970 876 638 • 01384 569 148
www.ragardenservices.net

SEDGLEY TREE CARE
Professional Tree Surgeon
All aspects of tree work undertaken
• CONTRACT TREE CLIMBER
• TREE REMOVAL
• CROWN REDUCTION
• STUMP GRINDING
• HEDGE TRIMMING
• GARDEN CLEARANCES
ALL WASTE REMOVED
NPTC QUALIFIED
07746813358 or
01902 659692
FOR A FREE QUOTE

Landscapers

CARDINAL LANDSCAPES
West Midlands
Specialists in Patios, Driveways, Paths, Fencing, Turfing, Decking and Landscaping
Call now for a FREE QUOTE
01902 562600 or
07539 887144

Landscapers

LANDSCAPING
Fencing, Patios and Driveways, Turfing and Artificial Grass, Retaining Walls, Pond Installation & Garden Clearance
CALL US ON:
07817 553 346
01384 387 016
TERRA FIRMA LANDSCAPING
info@terrafirma-arb.co.uk
www.terrafirma-arb.co.uk

Plumbing & Heating

P.S. Heating & Plumbing
Combi Boiler change from £950
Specialists in Biasi / Baxi / Worcester Bosch / Vaillant Boilers plus many more
SPECIAL OFFERS ON FULL HEATING SYSTEMS
NATURAL & LPG GAS
Fully Insured up to £2 million
Free Quotation
07961 140885
safe 301067

Local Specialists

Local Specialists

Roofing

M&M Roofing & Fascias
Est 2001

Quality

- uPVC Fascias
- Soffits
- Guttering
- Cladding
- All aspects of roofing
- New roofs/repairs
- Flat roofs
- Tiling/slating
- Dry verges
- Approved fibre glass installer

Also
CONCRETE GUTTERING
Specialist removal
Replacing with
Modern low maintenance
Upvc Fascias and Soffits

All work guaranteed with HomePro Insurance

No Free Gimmicks Family Business

Local References if required

Registered with HomePro Insurance

Membership No. 554518

TRUST MARK Government Endorsed Standards www.trustmark.org.uk

FAIRTRADES

Giving homeowners peace of mind
ALWAYS FREE ADVICE AND QUOTATION
Freephone 0800 799 9413
Mob: 07906 724736
to speak to Mark
123 Amblecote Road, Brierley Hill, West Midlands DY5 2YD

Tree Surgeon

TREE SURGEONS
11 YEARS EXPERIENCE IN ALL ASPECTS OF TREE MAINTENANCE & TREE FELLING, STUMP REMOVAL, HEDGE TRIMMING
CALL US ON:
07817 553 346
01384 387 016
TERRA FIRMA ARBORICULTURE
info@terrafirma-arb.co.uk
www.terrafirma-arb.co.uk

BROADCAST YOUR BUSINESS
WITH THE COMPLETE PRODUCTION OF A COMPELLING VIDEO

1. **PRE-PRODUCTION PLANNING**
   Where we find out about you!
2. **ON-LOCATION RECORDING**
   The important bit.
3. **AUDIO PRODUCTION**
   Music or voice over?
4. **POST PRODUCTION**
   Where the finishing touches happen.
5. **VIDEO ADVERTISING**
   Want even more exposure?

CALL 01902 319730

MNA DIGITAL

Source: www.mnadigital.co.uk/video-advertising

ROOFING SERVICES
One of the Leading Roofing Companies
No Job too Small, No Job too Big

- Gutters Cleaned From £15
- Small Repairs From £15
- Pointing Work From £15

SPECIAL OFFERS
on all UPVC Fascias, Gutters, New Roofs/Slate Tile & Felt and Garage Roofs.
- Rubberised flat roofing
- Flat roof specialist
- Insurance work undertaken
- Est 25 years
- **Discounted for OAPs**
- Exterior Painting

FREE QUOTES AVAILABLE

Home: 01384 872276
Mobile: 07584 081228

Rubbish Removal

A.J.B. Waste Management
Try us for a **FREE** no obligation quotation
FOR A CHEAP RUBBISH REMOVAL 6 DAYS
Small jobs NOT A PROBLEM
We load, No Skips, Free quotation
GARDEN, HOUSEHOLD, SHED, GARAGE, WHITE GOODS, HOUSE CLEARANCES FURNITURE.
You can also bring your own waste to our fully licensed transfer station
CALL TODAY AND LETS TALK RUBBISH

Tel 0121 520 7731

ELITE PLASTICS

- Fascias • Sofits • Dry Verge
- Pointing • Gutter Cleaning And Repair

Premium Products Expertly Fitted With Full Manufacture Guarantee.
For A Free Quote call
01384 468831 / 07985 575865
www.eliteplasticsupvc.co.uk

Skip Hire

MT SKIPS & GRAB HIRE
Save £££s
All size skips and all areas covered
Same day delivery faster than
A phone call!!!
Open 7 days a week
SCRAP CARS REMOVED FOR FREE

07920 88 57 74 or 01384 24 09 56

Most ads are legal, decent, honest and truthful.

In 2016, the ASA removed 4,824 that weren't.

ASA.org.uk
Advertising Standards Authority

Classified Ads

Buy Local, **Sell** Local

Funeral Directors

Wombourne Funeral Services
& Monumental Masons
For your nearest branch call 01902 892635
wombournefuneralservices.co.uk

A TRADITION OF TRUST

"We are very pleased with the service offered by the Express & Star. Our business and advertising needs are always well met."

Wombourne Funeral Services.

For great business results call
01902 319 191
ClassifiedAds
Brought to you by Express & Star

J.T. BROOKES
Independent family run Funeral Directors
24 hour service
Brierley Hill 01384 77098
Kingswinford 01384 296683
Hagley 01562 888041
www.nedowning.co.uk

Lost & Found

BLACK TABBY
Male, striking markings, missing from Limes Road, Tettenhall, since Feb 16. Microchipped and neutered. Please check sheds garages. Much loved and missed.
Any information 07773 560625.
Please like and share his Facebook page 'Find Missing Monty'

Christadelphian

THE PROMISES OF GOD - THEIR RELEVANCE TODAY God's promise to us, March 25, at 6pm, The Community Centre, High Street, Kingswinford, Or write to The Dawn (ref:KCE) 5 Station Road, Carlton, Notts. NG4 3AT for free information pack or ring 01384 886544 for recorded message.

1 Family

Elderly & Disabled

WREKIN STAIRLIFTS reconditioned lifts from £799. New available. 01952 405397/07897 273617

WORLD OF MOBILITY
Stourbridge's longest established Family Run Mobility Store
Brettell Lane, Amblecote, Stourbridge DY8 4BS. Open Mon-Sat.
01384 378252

MOBILITY SCOOTER 4 wheel, Hartway make, very good condition, hardly used. Bargain £400. 07562 238603.

2 Leisure Time

Caravans Wanted

CARAVAN WANTED. Can collect asap. Cash paid. Caravan wanted. Call me on 07717 090817.

LET US SELL YOUR CARAVAN/ Motorhome for you and get the best possible price. Severn Valley Leisure, DY8 4HP. 01384 390183

Caravans/ Motorhomes

AVONDALE DART 2002
As new awning and canopy. Tall sleeping annexe. Motor mover and awning mate. Lots of extras too many to mention.
£5,000 ono.
01902 270658

CARAVAN HOLIDAY HOME
Sited on family owned site, fully equipped, Mid Wales. 39ft x 12ft. 2 bed, sleeps 6. The site has many facilities. Fully furnished, DG, CH. Call for photos and details.
£17,250.
07766 664936.

Caravan Sales

A CHOICE OF CARAVANS FOR sale from £1995 to £6995, accessory shop, service, repairs,storage. Severn Valley Leisure Stourbridge,DY8 4HP 01384 390183 www.severnvalleyleisure.com

Self Catering Holidays

BURNHAM-ON-SEA
Self Catering Holiday Apartments
Disabled Facilities
Pet Friendly
01278 794111
www.GoSomerset.co.uk

Yorkshire

YORKSHIRE DALES
Meadow Holidays
Country Cottages / Suites in Wensleydale
" Weeks from £209 per couple
" Weekends just £99 per couple
Families Welcome
Walk in scenic countryside by waterfalls or visit historic market towns with friendly Inns
Brochure [24hrs] 01969 624145
email: rita@meadowholidays.com
www.meadowholidays.com

Travel Abroad

READERS ARE REMINDED to check with any Advertisers that their holiday costs are fully covered by a recognised bonding or insurance scheme.

Jumble Sales / Fetes

BRIC-A-BRAC FAIR
Sunday, 25th March
Next Sale: April 8th
* Vintage Sale April 29th *
KINVER COMMUNITY CENTRE, DY7 6ER
10.30am - 4pm
Tel: 01384 894464

Music Shop

ASHBURY (Jaz), Takamine (Tan 20G), Tokai (Gold Star, 1983), Tanglewood (Star), reasonable offers. 01902 679660.

Sports & Leisure

FreeAds
IT'S FREE, IT'S EASY
To sell items upto £250.
Online at
bookanad.expressandstar.co.uk

3 Home & Services

Collectables & Memorabilia

CAVERHAM LIMITED edition, large plate, Queen Mother's 80th birthday, £35. o.n.o. 07946 449215.

LIMITED EDITION set of five dog plates, Westies, Terriers. £80. o.n.o. 07946 449215.

ROYAL WORCESTER Porcelain plates, set of 4, Celebration of the Queen's Reign, £80. o.n.o. 07946 449215.

SPODE 1926 Billingsley Rose, full dinner service, terrines, bowls, etc, £300. o.n.o. 07946 449215.

Furniture

CAST IRON FOUR POSTER bed, complete with bed linen, cream Nottingham lace, £1,200 o.n.o. 07946 449215.

CHESTERFIELD SUITE. Three seater settee and two armchairs. Brown. Very good condition. £2,200 ono. 01902 492846.

CREAM LEATHER recliner three piece suite, chairs electric reclining, nearly new. £250 ono. 01922 869714.

GPLAN BEIGE large leather settee, £100. Peter Guild rust stripe settee and chair, £100, both good condition. 07437 971290.

OAK DRESSER 70 years old, very good condition. £100 ono. Must collect. 07963 016216.

Items For Sale

ADVERTISERS ARE REMINDED
That the Business Advertisements(Disclosure) Order of 1977 requires that advertisements must clearly differentiate between Private and Trade.

CONCRETE MIXER Belle Mini Mix, 150, purchased August 2000, electric 240v, used 10 times only, £130. 0121 357 0963.

CORRUGATED GALVANISED Sheets. New, £8 can deliver. Also box profile and PVC/polycarb. David Broxton on 07834 489558.

LOOK
HOUSE CLEARANCE AT CLAVERLEY
Cooker. Fridge Freezer. Washing Machine. Tables. Chairs. Wardrobes. Dressing Table. Sideboard.
Lots of other items.
All must go.
07973 129143.

SINGLE DIVAN BED, unused, still in wrapper with orthopaedic mattress, £100. 01902 633781.

HAVE YOU CHECKED your advertisement today? We would respectfully remind advertisers that it is their responsibility to inform the publishers of any mistakes or inaccuracies on the first day of publication.

Items Wanted

A BEST CASH PRICE

FOR ALL RAILWAY COLLECTIONS
Any gauge or age
Hornby/Bachmann/Bowmans/ Roundhouse/Graham/Farsh/ any live steam. Also Die Cast, Corgi, Dinky, Spot On.
01384 836219/07891 713547
thetrainmaster67@hotmail.com

ALL BRASS/COPPER ornaments/ brassware, all descriptions, miners lamps, old medals, dinky, corgi toys and railways. 01902 745598.

WANTED
ALL MILLITARIA ITEMS FROM WARS WANTED BY COLLECTOR
Swords, medals, helmets etc, single or full items.
German, Japenese, British.
Will collect.
Very good prices paid
07511 500337.

MAMOD STEAM engines/trains wanted.All conditions, railway collections, Scalextric by Tri-ang any condition. 01902 745598.

READERS ARE ADVISED to carefully consider all of their options before agreeing to the sale of any of their items.

Loans

READERS ARE REMINDED that they may require professional advice before entering into obligations.

In Your Garden

CHESTNUT SHEDS AND FENCING LTD
Manufacturers and Suppliers of Heavy Duty Fully Tanalised Sheds, Summerhouses & All Garden Buildings.
Super Quality/Competitive Prices
Bespoke Buildings Fitting Available
Unit 17, Oak Street, Quarry Bank DY5 2JH
01384 913422/01384 569779
www.chestnutshedsandfencing.co.uk

LAWN TRACTOR 22 HP. 42IN CUT
With collector.
As new. Unused.
Cost £4,000
will accept £1,995.
Can deliver.
07710 169150.

specialists at your service

Aerials

AA DIGITAL AERIALS Checktrade.com
AERIALS FITTED FROM £79.99
01902 858191 • 01384 429166
01543 439095 • 01922 716029

Holidays Abroad

COACH HOLIDAYS TO SPAIN
MONDAY & FRIDAY DEPARTURES
2018 BROCHURE OUT NOW!
ALL HOTELS HAVE POOLS ARE NEAR THE BEACH, SHOPS AND BARS
DEPARTURES: APRIL•MAY•JUNE•JULY•AUG•SEPT•OCT

10 DAYS/7 NIGHTS
HALF BOARD FROM £209 PER ADULT
ALL INCLUSIVE FROM £224 PER ADULT
PICK UP POINTS NATIONWIDE
CHILD PLACES from £69
RING TODAY FOR YOUR FREE BROCHURE
SIGN UP FOR THE LATEST OFFERS
ABTA W4236
TEL: 01443 844222
ferriscoachholidays.co.uk

CLASSIFIEDS FOR YOU!

"I am very pleased with the response I get from my Classified Advertising Contract"

Steve - AA Digital Aerials

For great business results call
01902 319 191
ClassifiedAds
Brought to you by Express & Star

Alarms/Security

PREMIER ALARMS
Supplied and Fitted £249
Servicing and Repairs
12 Months Warranty
All areas covered
All quotes beaten!
Call: 0121 601 9791

Building Services

DAVIES & SON BUILDERS
All Building & Roofing Work
Driveways, Landscaping
Over 40 year exp | All work guaranteed
Free Quotes: 07837 994465
01902 579 592

Brickwork Maintenance
Boundary Walls, Steps, Part Rebuilds, Brick Replacement, Repointing, Cleaning etc. CRB, C&G, Insured, Free Quotes.
Lee
0789 147 5718 or 0121 585 8263
lee@blackcountrybrick.co.uk

Fencing

CLASSIFIEDS FOR YOU!

"I am extremely happy with the service I get from my Express & Star Classified Sales Representatives and would recommend them to anyone! They have done a very professional job with my website so I get online enquiries as well now."

Michael- Portway Fencing

For great business results call
01902 319 191
ClassifiedAds
Brought to you by Express & Star

PORTWAY FENCING
SPECIAL OFFER
10 Bays of quality fencing, concrete posts, gravel boards £695
Heavy duty panels supplied & fitted.
0121 531 5250 / 07866 137 656
Mon - Fri 8am - 4.30pm
Sat 8am - 12noon
83 Portway Rd, W'bury
DELIVERY AVAILABLE
www.portwayfencing.co.uk

Carpet & Upholstery Cleaning

A BRILLCLEAN FOR YOUR CARPETS & SUITES
Special offers March/April OAP discounts.
Call Steve on 07496 922324

Electrical Services

STEVE JONES ELECTRICAL Rewires/sockets/fuse boards etc. All domestic and commercial work. 07786 858977/01902 846167.

Gardening Services

GARDENS TIDIED from £5 per garden. 25 years experience. Call 01902 713106 / 07813 184086.

Gas Fitting

READERS ARE ADVISED
To check that anyone carrying out any Gas work is Gas Safe Registered.
It is an offence under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 to carry out gas work in the UK without being on the Gas Safe Register.

Home Improvements

K.J.M. SERVICES
17yrs exp. No job too big/small. Paint/decorating, Roofing, Landscape gardening, Fascia/soffits/guttering, Jet washing, Fencing.
07376 306357

House Clearances

A ABSOLUTE BEST cash price paid for house clearances and bereavements. Also removals undertaken. **07852 172641 / 07710 360327 / 01902 534021**

ABSOLUTELY ANYTHING CLEARED
FULL OR PART, GARAGES AND SHEDS RUBBISH REMOVED WASTE LICENCE
01384 486456 / 07711661135

Painters/ Decorators

LOVE 2 WALLPAPER
Reliable & Friendly, Professional
Female Painters & Decorators
Attention to detail, competitive prices.
For the Perfect Finish with minimum hassle.
Plastering & Coving Work Undertaken
01384 287577 or 07812 484194
www.love-2-wallpaper.co.uk

Removals

CALL DEAN NOW: For all your Removal needs. 07429 453209/ 01902 830870 / 01384 940260.

CALL IAN. Man with a large van. No job too small, no distance too far. 07973 628534, 01902 891535.

KINGSWINFORD REMOVALS AND HOUSE CLEARANCES
We move anything.
Professional service,
45 years' experience,
DFS approved and we take the stress away.
Please call:
07966 281957

KT HOUSE REMOVALS
12 years experience.
SINGLE ITEMS TO FULL LOADS.
LOCAL OR DISTANCE. FULLY INSURED.
Free Quotes - Call Ric on:
07771 727119

Roofing

MG ROOFING
Flat Roofing, Tiling, Roof Repairs, Fascias and Gutters.
Call 01902 238989 / 07580 465449.
www.mgroofingwestmidlands.co.uk

Semi Retired Roofer
ALL ROOF REPAIRS
Felt and Rubber Flat Roofing
All at reasonable prices
07546 158165

Rubbish Removal

LETS TALK RUBBISH No Skips Needed.Load/Remove any Waste, House Clearance. 07969 628382

Skip Hire

BIG JOHN MOVES RUBBISH! No Skips, we load, fast friendly service, 25 Lister Rd, Dudley DY2 8JR, Est 40 years, 01384 232359.

4 Pets & Animals

Equestrian Corner

ALL READERS are advised to check if Horses, Donkeys or Ponies have the required Passport information, this is a legal requirement.

Guns & Dogs

NOTICE TO ADVERTISERS
Advertisers must ensure that they meet all necessary legal requirements for owning and using guns.

Pets Corner

NOTICE TO READERS
Please be aware that when purchasing a puppy there are some simple guidelines you can follow to ensure that you are not purchasing from a Puppy Farmer:
1. Try to ensure you visit the puppy whilst it is still with it's Mother.
2. Do not arrange to collect a puppy from any other location than that of the breeder.
3. Ensure that you are given any KC documentation, if pedigree.
Whilst Midland News Association publications take great care to avoid publication of advertisements from Puppy Farmers we cannot accept any liability should readers purchase from this kind of establishment.

GREYHOUNDS MAKE WONDERFUL PETS
All neutered, innoculated and microchipped.
Call 01902 291080 or visit
www.gtwolverhampton.co.uk
Greyhound Trust Wolverhampton
@gtwolverhampton

KIND HOMES WANTED
Lass - 2 year old pretty Border Collie. Lived with children, other dogs, good in car.
Maddie- mature Collie X Spaniel, really lovely gentle girl who just wants to be with you.
Lexi - 18 month tri colour Border Collie girl. Lovely girl who is desperate for some TLC after a bad start.
Lizzie and Bilbo - 4 months old Collie Cross, lovely dogs, lovely temperament. Will split.
Theo - tri colour Jack Russell. Approx 5 years old, vac's/neutered. Happy little chap.
01588 676106.
www.dogsamaritans.org.uk

LURCHERS

Ben - typical Lurcher, fawn / white, gentle boy with a lovely temperament, has lived with other dogs.

Call 01743 872395 or 01588 676106.

Jack

Greyhound / Saluki, approx 5 years, good on lead, loves his walks, timid, gentle boy, ideal pet.

01588 638560 / 01588 676106.

5 Business & Farming

Business Opportunities

READERS are recommended to take appropriate professional advice before entering into any obligations.

6 Property

Accommodation To Let

NOTICE TO READERS
It is an offence under the Accommodation Agencies Act 1953, for an Agency to charge a fee simply for the registration of your requirements and/or supplying particulars of premises to let.

NOTICE TO READERS
Readers are advised to seek independent legal advice before entering into any financial commitments/contracts.

A FURNISHED FLATLET for single, working, mature person, CH, TV, inc all bills, £365pcm. Also room available £275pcm. No DSS. Stafford Rd, Wton. 07957 595840.

Overseas Property

NOTICE TO READERS
Readers are advised to seek independent legal advice before entering into any financial commitments.

Properties Wanted

We buy houses
Sell your house fast
- avoid repossession
- behind on payments
- job relocation
- unwanted inheritance
What more -
we buy in any condition
No estate agent fees
We pay all your legal fees
ACT NOW !
Contact us on :
07796 801219 / 07988 882090

Properties Wanted

WE PAY 100% of purchase price EVERY TIME!
FAST 4 Your House CASH

BLACK COUNTRY HOMES

You agree the price, we buy the house...
- NO AGENTS FEES
- COMPLETION TO SUIT YOU
- FREE SOLICITORS
- ANY HOUSE, ANY CONDITION

0800 999 999 6
01384 500 500
30 yrs

www.black-countryhomes.co.uk * subject to terms

CASH NOW FOR YOUR HOUSE Wolverhampton properties

UP TO **£25,000** CASH ADVANCE NOW (in 24hrs)
• Free Solicitors • No Fees • Any House • Any Condition
We can buy your house in 2 days
0800 389 6788 01902 628047
Lines open 24 hours a day 7 days a week
Terms applicable

Yes! HOMEBUYERS
We will buy your house fast!
Free Valuation? Yes! Any House? Yes!
Fast Sale? Yes! Any Location? Yes!
No Fees? Yes! Any Condition? Yes!
FREE, GUARANTEED, instant offer today!
Call 01562 277 067
or text "Cash" to 66777
yeshomebuyers.com

8 Motoring

Cars Over £1500

HAVE YOU CHECKED your advertisement today? We would respectfully remind advertisers that it is their responsibility to inform the publishers of any mistakes or inaccuracies on the first day of publication.

SELL IT FAST SELL IT LOCAL
01902 317878
ClassifiedAds

7 Jobs

Courses

BIRMINGHAM: 5-6 May (also 5-6 Sept.)
WOLVERHAMPTON: 25-26 July (also 17-18 Nov.)
STOKE-ON-TRENT: 6-7 August TELFORD: 8-9 August

Learn how to take blood
TRAIN AS A **PHLEBOTOMIST**
Introduction to Phlebotomy
TWO DAY COURSE - NATIONALLY RECOGNISED
- Allied Healthcare Career Path
- Accredited (advanced) qualification
- No previous experience required

ACCREDITED ocn
For more info. or to book online: www.geopace.com
High demand in: Hospitals - GP Surgeries - Clinics - Private Sector - MOD - Research

Full Time General

MNA Media

SENIOR REPORTERS

The Express and Star is looking for Senior Reporters to join the news team of one of Britain's biggest selling regional newspapers.

The successful candidates will be multi platform journalists working for our popular daily title and award-winning website.

Candidates should be enthusiastic, versatile, creative and prepared to go the extra mile to find the stories for our innovative and highly respected title.
They must be accurate, multi-media skilled and be able to work calmly under pressure to meet tight deadlines.

The roles, which involve shift working including evenings and weekends, would suit someone who is qualified to at least NQJ accredited senior journalist or equivalent with a passion for news.

Anyone interested in applying should email
Editor's secretary Karen Baker at karen.baker@expressandstar.co.uk.
Please indicate in your application if you have a driving licence.

Closing date for applications: 6th April, 2018

Owners of Express & Star Ltd and Shropshire Newspapers Ltd
Express & Star STAR

FOR A QUICK SALE

FIAT 500 LOUNGE

12 reg, white, 58,000 miles, new cambelt, alloys, panoramic roof, had full service in December, excellent condition.

£4,200 ono.

Telephone 07973 483797.

FORD FIESTA STYLE CLIMATE, 2008, 20,400 miles, 1242cc, silver, 3 door, new MoT, service history, excellent condition, £2,750 ono. 07793 293422.

BARGAIN

LEXUS RX 400H

Lexus FSH, 57 plate,
98,000 miles, long MoT,
excellent condition,
all usual refinements.
Very reliable.

£5,995.

07917 730239.

MITSUBISHI SHOGUN LWB
Auto, diesel, 04 reg, silver, black leather, tow bar, MoT October,
high miles hence, £2,500.
01952 463413 or 07900 044107.

PEUGEOT 107 URBAN
5 door, 2011, 31,650 miles, silver, part service history, MoT July, superb condition, £20 tax.
£2,795 ono.
07867 473870.

BARGAIN

SEAT LEON 2011 AUTOMATIC DIESEL
Sat Nav.
FSH.
Blue.
A/C. Sunroof.
70,000 miles.
£5,195 ono.
07824 640177. 07506 178870.

Cars Under £1500

BARGAIN

CITROEN C3 DESIRE HDi

5-dr hatchaback grey, diesel, 1398cc, 07 plate, full MoT, 133,535 miles, good clean car inside and out.

£1,150 ono.

Any trial

07787 424281. 01902 238488.

CITROEN XSARA PICASSO
2005, 80,000 miles, abs, electric windows, central locking, pas, CD, MoT Sept 17, 2018, 1.6 16v petrol.
£999.
07879 403302.

FORD KA
04 reg, one owner, 43,000 miles only, very good condition, MoT October 2018,
£595.
07913 299273

BARGAIN

MERCEDES C1800K

1796cc, 03 plate, 4-dr saloon, alternative fuel car, gas, bi fuel, cost £850 to make run on gas, MoT August, clean inside and out, scrachless, any trial, 183100 miles.

£1475.

07971 219101. 01902 653442.

LOW MILEAGE

VAUXHALL AGILA

1229cc

16 valve, 2005.

Excellent condition, 5-dr,

£650.

01902 493310. 07948 277953.

Classic Cars

WANTED, CLASSIC Car. Private cash buyer. Any condition, anything considered.
01630 652993 or 07773 462797.

Scrap Vehicles

OUR ADVERTISERS are reminded that it is an offence under the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 to buy scrap cars/metal for cash.

A BETTER PRICE
for scrap or damaged cars and commercials. Spares for sale.
NINE LOCKS VEHICLE DISMANTLERS LTD
Brierley Hill 01384 76566 or 70553. Evenings 75397. DY5 3JZ.

spares & accessories

Clutches/Brakes/ Gearboxes

A CLUTCH CHANGE MOBILE
Renault Scenic, Vauxhall Zafira, Renault Clio, Ford Focus & KA and MANY MORE!!
Ring for quotes
30 yrs experience
ALL AREAS COVERED
Call Bob
01384 251328
07972 169554
anytime

Storage

STORAGE WANTED FOR CLASSIC CARS
IE Barn or unit.
No repair work will be carried out.
01902 238022 / 07734 412062.

Vehicles Wanted

CROWN MOTORS guarantee best price for your unwanted cars/vans. 07903 549849, buyer will call.

alan reed cars
Used cars wanted for cash
Top prices paid. HP settled.
Buyer could call.
01562 711083 / 07831 245313

9 Local Information

Public Notices

PUBLIC & LEGAL NOTICES
For convenience you may fax any advertising requirements to Marie Hogg on **01902 319694** or email **marie.hogg@expressandstar.co.uk**
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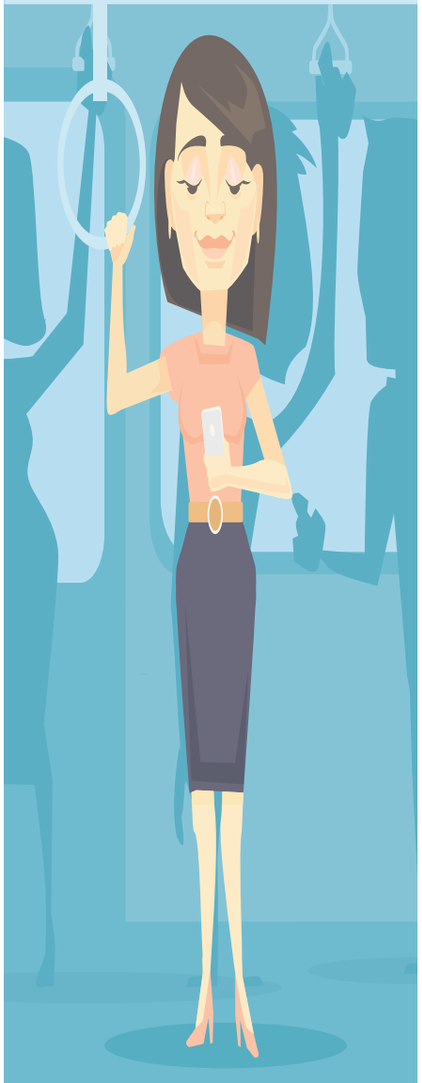

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Joseph with students at the Northern England Open Championships towards the end of last year

Successful students celebrate their gradings at Burntwood Leisure Centre last month

Joe Morrell, Mya Brown, Sam Rushworth and Alex Monte-Godfrey

Joseph Mongan with Mya Brown who bagged a bronze and silver

Karate ace still gets kick out of teaching

A KARATE ace has rekindled his love for the sport thanks to his stepson's curiosity.

Joseph Mongan is a former Funakoshi world champion. He's also an ex-World Karate Federation European champion, a Commonwealth bronze medalist, and a third Dan black belt.

After admittedly falling out of love with a sport he has now rediscovered his passion after stepson Leo found his medals and his interest piqued.

Joseph had run a successful academy in Ipswich, but left it behind to move to Staffordshire with his wife. Following the gentle nudge from Leo, Joseph set up JGM Karate Academy in Norton Canes, near Cannock, and his current crop are beginning to replicate his success.

Three of them have picked up medals at national level, just two years since he opened the academy.

"Leo was searching through some stuff and just happened to stumble across my medals and trophies in a box," said Joseph.

Impressive

"He asked me if I would teach him, and that's where it all started, really. I had an academy back in Ipswich which me and my brother ran, and we had a lot of success there – some of our students won some very impressive medals."

The JGM Karate Academy now boasts more than 100 members – the oldest a grandmother in her 70s – with training at Jerome Primary School, Norton Canes Community Centre and Burntwood Leisure Centre. The club's first black belt vies to become a Dan in April and other club members are on their way to claiming belts.

Joseph accepts members from all age groups, backgrounds and abilities, and they have recently competed at the Kyu Grade English National Championships – picking up four medals.

Joe Morell, aged 16, the club captain, won bronze in the Kata. Sam Rushworth, 14, also picked up a bronze in Kata at the 14-15 age group, and Mya Brown, 11, bagged both a bronze in the Kata and a silver in the Kumite, making her a double national medalist. "Mya is looking at attending the British Championships in May, and we're working very closely with her," said Joseph.

SPORTING FEATURE

By Adam Washbrook

"Some come because they perhaps struggle to manage their anger, and the sport helps teach them discipline. We really have helped people in all ways, and it's very rewarding."

"To be able to compete in both styles at her age is a fantastic achievement.

"There's international championships later in the year, in Poland and Venice. There's a chance we could have members competing in those too."

There has also been success at the USA Open, Central England Championships, The Yorkshire Open and the KAA National Championships.

"We have very high hopes for them and their futures," added Joseph.

But while there is success on the mat, Joseph admits money is sometimes a cause for concern, especially since Karate England cut the funding it used to provide.

"The students deserve recognition, and the sport needs it," he said. "We're actively looking for sponsorships because equipment and travel to tournaments and such doesn't come free.

"Without the recognition and the Press for these events, people don't know we need the sponsorship and it can be difficult at times. At the moment, parents fund the majority of event participation, and we do what we can to help.

"For the English Nationals, we put on a raffle at the Christmas party. People were very kind and we made £100 for the students, which we contributed towards the competitors' fees, meaning they paid around £15 per event."

A 100 Kata challenge last week has so far raised around £350 which will help towards tournament entry and travel. More than 20 club members took part in the challenge to do 100 Katas.

Joseph himself has also been sent back to school to learn a new style for his students. "I regraded Shotokan to help some of my students. It was a certainly a challenge!" he said.

"It was a lot of hard work and a lot of late nights, but I got there. It's very interesting the difference in fitness and strength conditioning required, but it sparks my enjoyment to be learning something new, and to develop and push myself."

Though his students' medals are at the forefront of his success, the 33-year-old says there are many more rewarding factors to teaching. It's something he says has taken him by surprise. I was telling my wife, it's almost unbelievable the variety of reasons that we have people come to the academy," he added.

Discipline

"We've had people coming looking to learn basic self-defence, some coming to improve their fitness. You kind of expect those, but then on the other side of the spectrum we've had people come who are low on confidence and who use it help them grow.

"Some come because they perhaps struggle to manage their anger, and the sport helps teach them discipline. We really have helped people in all ways, and it's very rewarding."

With karate now an official sport for the 2020 Olympics, Joseph hopes the academy can grow in line with the sport.

"We're working with academy associates at the moment and we just want to keep growing," he said. "We're looking to start a karate league soon and invite other clubs in the area so that we can raise the competition standard.

"There's the British Championships in May and we've got high hopes. I'm just looking forward to seeing how things go."

To get involved with the academy, contact them via their Facebook page – JGM Karate Academy.

Tommy not fazed by Ghent-ing arena bout

TOMMY Ghent believes the Genting Arena will be the perfect venue to get fans excited again following his four-year hiatus.

The 25-year-old from Coseley will compete on BCB Promotions' Now Or Never show on Saturday evening – just his third fight since returning in 2017 – when he takes on Lithuania's Arvydas Trizno,

'Rock n Rolla' has been reinvigorated since his comeback, with brother Richie in his corner, and wants to use this next fight to show he is a title contender. "I am getting back into my stride again and I am feeling more relaxed with each session," he said. "I am looking forward to getting back in the ring."

Also on the bill Birmingham's Andrew Robinson battles Brighton's Nicky Jenman for the vacant middleweight crown. Wolverhampton's Kyle Williams takes on Nottingham's Jordan Turner for the Midlands Area Bantamweight strap and Birmingham's Kash Ali steps in with Sheffield fighter David Howe for the Central Area Heavyweight crown.

Opening night of darts academy hits bullseye

THE opening night of the West Midlands Darts Academy certainly hit the bullseye. Allen's Sports Bar in Tipton was the venue for the venture that aims to get youngsters aged between six and 17 interested in the game.

Organiser and coach Russell Dingley said 25 young dart aces checked in for the opening night. He said: "I expected six or seven kids, so it was a fantastic turnout. The darting community around here is massive so we were really happy with the opening."

Alfie Jacques, who won the JDC tour in 2017 aged just 14, turned out to support the opening of the academy. He said: "It was fantastic to see such a great turnout, because it shows how many people are interested in darts.

"It' great for players like me because I know that I've got competition and I've got to keep up and play against players like this because they are going to come on just as well as I have in the future."

For more details about the academy, search West Midlands Junior Darts Academy on Facebook.

Extra seats as fans flock to Edgbaston

EDGBASTON is to increase its capacity for its three highest profile matches this year. Warwickshire announced they are to install a temporary stand to increase the ground's 24,550 capacity by 850 seats as England face Australia in an international T20 match on June 27, for the First Test against India from August 1 and for the domestic T20 Blast finals day on September 15.

A temporary extra tier of seating will be placed above the Stanley Barnes Stand. Gareth Roberts, commercial director at Warwickshire CCC, said: "This will be the third time in the last four years that we have brought in a temporary stand as a result of the popularity of the fixtures we are hosting.

"The Vitality IT20 against Australia is now 75 per cent sold out, while year-on-year ticket sales for Vitality Blast Finals Day are 170 per cent up on last year.

"We've also seen huge demand for day three of the Test match against India, which will be a very special occasion as England's 1,000th Test."

Sport

Students belt up as karate coach rekindles passion

Page 39

Brace for Hughes on Yeltz debut

Nantwich 1 Halesowen Town 3

FORMER West Bromwich Albion hero Lee Hughes scored twice, his first goals for Halesowen Town as The Yeltz gained a victory in Cheshire.

He also had a role in the other goal for Ivor Lawton as John Hill's side picked up three vital Evo-Stik League Premier Division points.

Hughes starred with his first goals in a Halesowen Town shirt as the Yeltz secured three vital points.

With Evo-Stik League Premier Division relegation rivals Sutton Coldfield Town also winning, it was vital Halesowen gained all three points and it was a solid performance overall from Hill's men.

Meanwhile, new signing John Oyenuga, who joined from Connahs Quay Nomads, started on the bench,

Hughes could have put Halesowen ahead after just three minutes but put his shot over the bar.

Lee Knight then scuffed his shot as he went one-on-one with Nantwich goalkeeper Myles Boney.

Ivor Lawton headed in though on 12 minutes when Knight set him up after Hughes had initially crossed.

Nantwich got on level terms six minutes later when Matthew Bell scored from the edge of the area.

But on 21, Enoch Ekongo provided a neat pass for Hughes to drill home and make it 2-1.

The two seem to be forming a decent partnership as Ekongo again turned provider on 62 minutes.

His nice run and cross was finished by Hughes to seal the win.

● Hughes bankrupt – page 3

'Ruthless' ready for a return to the ring

REIGNING Midlands middleweight champion Tyler Denny will return to action headlining a six-fight card at the Venue in Dudley next month.

Fight night has been scheduled for April 7, ten months on from when paid pugilists last performed under those lights. Denny, Kane Baker, Les Byfield, Ryan 'Stewart' Davies, Danny Ball and Humza Ali will occupy the home corner.

Denny laces on the gloves for the first time since his title glory on September 30, outpointing Tom Stokes for the vacant strap. 'Ruthless' has now set his sights on the English crown, currently held by Elliott Matthews, but will first keep busy with this six-rounder. The 26-year-old from Rowley Regis has utilised his southpaw skills to the tune of seven points victories from nine pro contests, with two draws.

Kingswinford's 21-year-old Ball has a couple of first round TKOs to his credit, just four outings into his professional journey. Tickets, £35 or £50 ringside, are available by calling 07976 283 157.

Hagley Lording it for indoor finals

WORCESTERSHIRE county champions Hagley will play at the home of cricket after beating sides representing Bedfordshire and Wales.

They will meet Woodlands, from Yorkshire, the northern regional champions, in the second semi-final of the national indoor finals at Lord's Cricket Academy at 12.45pm on Saturday. The winners will take on Devon or Kent in the final.

At Edgbaston, Hagley were set an imposing total of 149-3 by Potton Town which they reached for the loss of only two wickets. They followed up with a win over Haverfordwest who posted only 98-5 which Hagley passed with one wicket down.

In the WCB indoor league, Coombes Wood (87-5) beat Oldswinford (74-4) by 13 runs.

After losing opener Carl Whyte, Coombes Wood's usually reliant batsmen struggled. Captain Mike Langford (25) dug in, but the total was below par. In reply , Oldswinford started well, losing the first wicket at 45 (Paddy Addis 27 no). The result looked inevitable but the runs dried up and the rate required rocketed. The return of Addis failed to produce the runs, giving Coombes Wood an unlikely win to stay top of the league.

In the other game, Stourbridge (88-5) beat Pedmore (68 all out) by 20 runs.

Stourbridge batsmen too found it hard going, apart from Ali Rashid with 34 no against bowlers who were a trifle wayward.

Pedmore again found runs hard to come by as the opening bowlers Mikesh Patel and Jevaad Nazir bowled their three overs conceding only 33 runs for three wickets. Pedmore fell further behind the rate and were all out in the 11th over.

SNOW LUCK IN CHILL THRILLER

Stourbridge 26 Sheffield Tigers 28

IF Stourbridge were to have any realistic chance of promotion, this was a 'must win' game but the loss of eight key players meant Neil Mitchell was unable to field his top 20 squad.

But a debut try by Phil Bowden gave the 175-strong crowd something to cheer on the seven minutes mark and Robbie Forbes secured the extra two points.

As conditions fluctuated between bright and blizzard, Tigers responded after just three minutes when danger man James Broadley ghosted in from 25 metres out. The former Rotherham Titan has 24 tries to his name, which is six more than anyone else in this league.

Five minutes later, tight head prop Ed Simmons charged over after the hosts conceded a deliberate knock on penalty. Lineout catch and drive gave the opportunity but Thomas Farrell was unable to convert the extras.

The half time score was 7-10 and with the wind the hosts were hopeful . It started well when the industrious Nick Murphy crashing over after five minutes. Tigers were caught offside and the lineout saw a great catch by Llyr Griffiths to feed captain Adam Sturdy and Murphy was in support.

Bonus

Replacement prop Stef Thorp then added another try 10 minutes later and Forbes added the conversion. Tigers hit back with a second try from Ed Simmons but Farrell failed to convert, as did he did again with Tigers' bonus point try scored by Matt Adcock on the 67-minute mark. He made up for this just three minutes later when the No 10 stretched Tigers' lead to 19-25 with a try of his own.

Replacement prop Mark George made his mark and Robbie Forbes' conversion gave Stour the lead. But Thomas Farrell stroked over the final kick of the game to give Sheffield their victory.

Maria took on world champ

From left, women's world champion Ng On Yee with Reanne Evans and Maria Catalano

DUDLEY potter Maria Catalano got to the WLBS World Women's Snooker Championship final in Malta but suffered a heavy 5-0 defeat to Hong Kong's reigning champion Ng On Yee.

On Yee whitewashed Dudley's Catalano, aged 36, who rose to number three in the world rankings after making her fifth world final, and first since 2013, on Saturday. Catalano had secured her final place earlier that day having stunned 32-year-old 11-time word champion Reanne Evans by a 4-3 scoreline in an all-Dudley semi-final..

The World Women's Snooker Tour will return for its final event of the 2017/18 season with the Women's Festival of Snooker, April 13-16, at the Northern Snooker Centre, Leeds.

Glassboys concede at the death

Stourbridge 2 Ashton United 3

GARY Hackett was a frustrated manager after Stourbridge gave away a last-minute winner.

Substitute Josh Granite was given space in the box to head home from a corner and take all three Evo-Stik Premier points back to Greater Manchester.

It was cruel on the Glassboys who had looked a different side in the second half after a scrappy opening period punctuated by flurries of snowfall.

Ashton adapted slightly better with Matt Gould in the Stour goal having to be on his toes. He was unlucky right before the break when he blocked a shot by Nick Evangelinos after good work from Daniel Mooney but the ball came back to the former, who made no mistake.

Substitute Luke Shearer was introduced by at half-time and he injected pace into the Glassboys' attack, but it was on-loan Shrewsbury midfielder Chris Gallagher who set up the equaliser on 54 minutes, Kaiman Anderson providing the finish.

Luke Benbow was unlucky on the hour and Gould again produced a great save to deny Liam Tomsett.

The introduction of Ashton's Khanye Makhosini, proved vital on 70 minutes when he got down the left and crossed for Evangelinos to finish. Almost immediately after Shearer was brought down in the box and Leon Broadhurst crashed home the penalty to make it 2-2. But the unmarked Granite rocked up in the box and rose to secure all three points.

Basketball call-up from Team England

DOMINIQUE Allen will be flying out to Australia with the England basketball squad after being selected for the Commonwealth Games.

Allen, 28, from Netherton, has been selected for the final 12-woman squad, which will compete on the Gold Coast next month.Dominique,whose father Clive also represented England, is currently at a training camp in Cardiff with the rest of Team England. They are seeded in a group with Australia, Canada and Mozambique.

Father Clive, a coach at West Bromwich Albion Basketball Club, said: "We're so proud of her achievement."

★★★

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